INQUIRY®

MAGAZINE

JULY 7 & 21, 1980 • $1.25

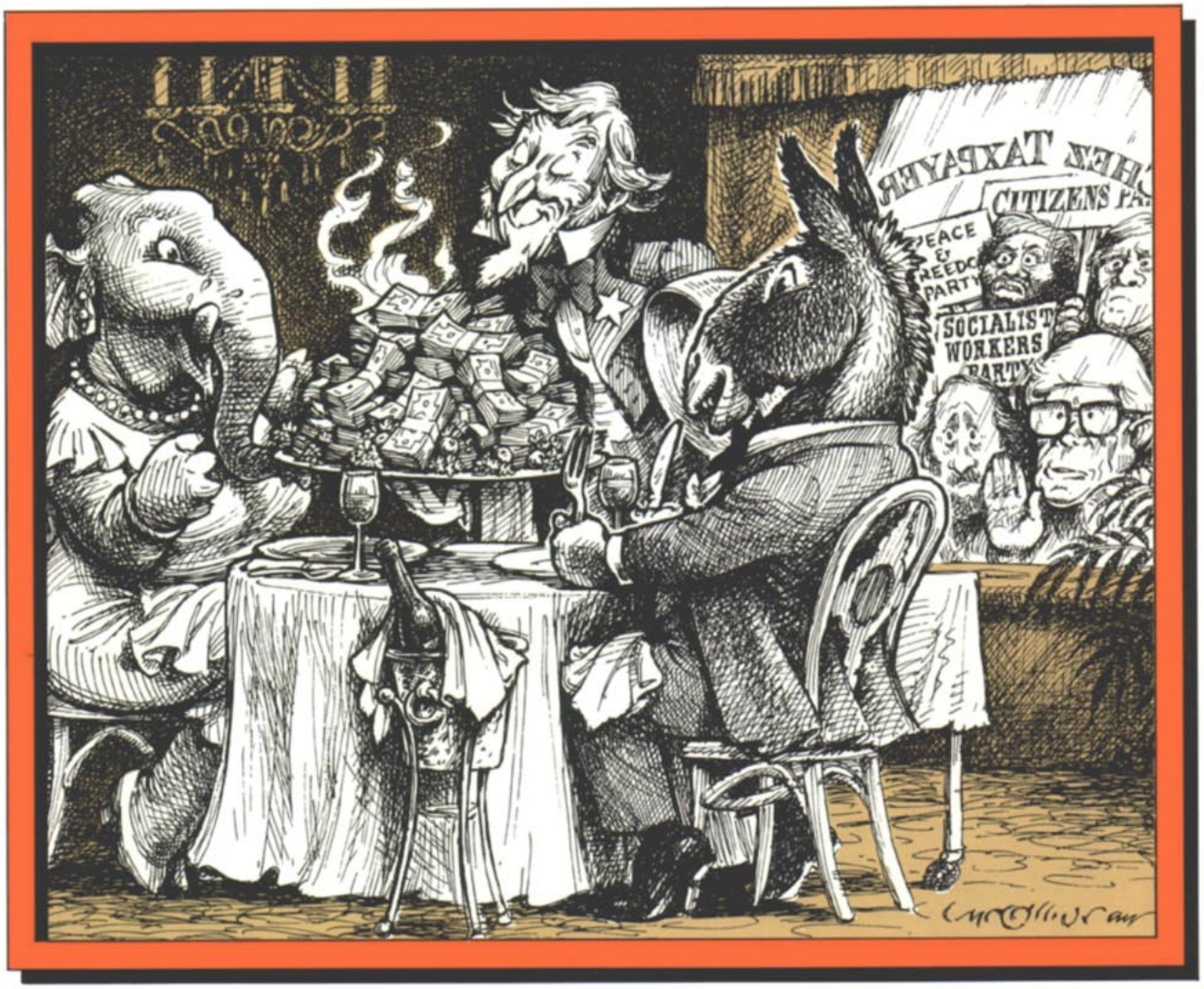
The Two Faces of RONALD REAGAN

Washington's Futile High-Tech Embargo

Reviews by Burgess, Sherrill, Davenport

How the Donkey and the Elephant turned into Pigs

By MARY MEEHAN



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INQUIRY®

JULY 7 & 21, 1980

How the Donkey and the Elephant turned into Pigs

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Some political animals are still more equal than others, despite the 'reform' of presidential campaign financing.

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This macho gunslinger, willing to risk war at the drop of a blockade, isn't so hard-line on cutting big government.

Sheep in Wolf's Clothing

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By restricting high-tech exports we think we're hurting the Soviets, but the facts don't support this delusion.

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Yes, Virginia, there is a Sabbath. Forced to choose between their religion and their graduation ceremony, the Stein sisters went to court. (*NAT HENTOFF*)

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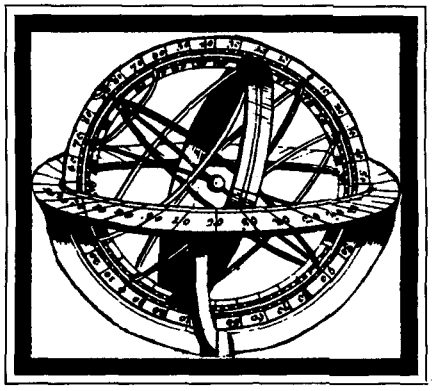
Veterans as guinea pigs. When VA medicos want to do experiments, they don't always worry enough about the welfare of their patients. (*ROBERT KLEIN*)



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A WORD FROM THE PUBLISHER

SOMETIMES, ACCORDING to the *Wall Street Journal,* when Ronald Reagan starts to discuss foreign policy with the press, his nervous aides begin shouting, "the buses are leaving." According to Murray Rothbard's perceptive analysis of the Reagan mind in this issue, the miasma extends to domestic policy as well. None of this will prevent the delegates in Detroit from nominating Ronald the Simple for President of the United States, heedless of what they're getting themselves—and us—into. Meanwhile, two of the great heroes of former Republican conventions have become "unpersons," and will not figure at all at the gathering. Bob Sherrill reports on one of these men, Spiro Agnew, in our book section. We hope that none of our contributors will ever have occasion to report on the other great Republican crook in the future.

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RES PUBLICA

Kill the enemies of the people in their holes

■ The [Philippine] Government is offering television sets, refrigerators and water buffaloes as prizes in a rat-tail raffle to try to clean up rodent-infested rice fields.

Residents of Bulacan Province north of Manila can exchange the tails of rats they have killed for tickets in the raffle.

Among other prizes are cattle, piglets, hand tractors, electrical appliances and agricultural chemicals.

—*New York Times, Mar. 24, 1980*

And we won in Vietnam, too

■ Secretary of the Navy Edward Hidalgo said Tuesday . . . that the aborted mission to rescue the American hostages in Iran was "a success in many ways." He spoke of the impressive skill and technology employed by the U.S. military forces and said that only "unforeseen and unforeseeable circumstances" kept the hostages from being rescued.

—*Chicago Tribune, May 15, 1980*

One number seven, heavy on the peas

■ When the Soviet press announced in February that two pizzerias would open soon in Moscow, cynics predicted that the first customers would be told, "We don't have any."

The pizzerias opened this month—and they didn't have any.

"What on earth is a pizza?" asked the manager of one of the establishments on Bolshoi Komsomolsky Lane. She had heard that the Yugoslav workers equipping the place would install an oven to make something consisting of green peas in fried eggs.

—*San Francisco Chronicle, May 12, 1980*

Government support for the arts

■ Ornithologists in the Ukraine have bred canaries able to sing bass for a canary singing group whose repertoire includes Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata" and Russian folk songs, the newspaper Moscow News reported today.

The breeding of bass-singing canaries has now given the group "complete harmony," the paper said.

—*New York Times, May 5, 1980*

Candid bureaucrat

■ The head of the General Services Administration told Congress Thursday that his scandal-scarred agency suffers from three basic problems: "stupidity, mismanagement . . . and fraud."

—*Los Angeles Times, May 2, 1980*

Demons overheard to say: "This is the place."

■ Many of the townspeople are convinced that Satan has been operating [in Heber City, Utah] in the guise of the fantasy game Dungeons and Dragons, and an after-school program using the game has been discontinued because of the resulting pressure.

"I feel the devil right here in the media center," one woman told Michael Tunnell, the school librarian, at a meeting for parents to discuss the issue.

—*New York Times, May 3, 1980*

The voice of science

■ Who gives a damn whether homosexual discrimination is real or imagined. The fatheads in Washington, that's who—and they're blowing nearly a half-million dollars of your hard-earned tax money to find the answer to the question. Dr. Harold Voth, a psychiatrist at the famed Menninger Foundation, offered the government the answer to the question free of charge.

"Of course homosexuals are discriminated against," Dr. Voth said. "They are discriminated against because they're not normal people. . . . Gays damage their own cause because of the incredible self-deception that their condition is normal or simply a matter of conscious, freewill preference—which is a load of crap," Dr. Voth said.

"The federal government would be much wiser allocating money for studies to investigate every variable which leads to the homosexual condition—and then to set up treatment centers for them."

—*National Enquirer, Apr. 8, 1980*

A job well done

■ A census taker . . . apparently was determined to leave no door unopened and no head uncounted. . . .

Residents of a Chicago apartment building said Ted Knutson, 27, would kick, scream and bang on their doors, demanding entrance because he was a census taker. If they tried to see what the fuss was about, he would cover the peephole with his fingers, they said.

When residents opened their doors, "Knutson sprang like a gazelle into their living rooms and began pumping them for information."

—*San Francisco Examiner, May 21, 1980*

The Empire Strikes Back

■ A mock-up of American and Soviet intercontinental ballistic missiles stands on a bookshelf in Zbigniew Brzezinski's corner office in the White House. Beside the missiles is a small, black, plastic figure holding what appears to be a sword. It is Darth Vader, the dark warrior of "Star Wars."

—*Philadelphia Inquirer, May 18, 1980*

Relevance in the public-school curriculum

■ [Nancy] Grygiel [a teacher at the Jefferson School in Dixon, Illinois] wanted her third-grade class to do a project using visual aids. She assigned the children to write kidnap notes.

The children complied with the assignment. One of the children's notes said:

"I have your daughter. I will giver her back for 2000 dollars. If you want her back drop it in Jefferson School's garbage can. If you call the cops, I will kill your daughter."

—*San Francisco Chronicle, May 21, 1980*

Finally, a law that makes sense

■ Pittsburgh Councilman William R. Robinson . . . has introduced a measure making it illegal for cats to jump up on babies and suck out their breath.

—*Miami Herald, May 2, 1980*

A choice, not an echo

■ Harold Covington lost the Republican primary for North Carolina attorney general, but says his 43 percent showing demonstrates that "There are 56,000 people in this state who are either Nazis or fools." Covington, 26, is the leader of the National Socialist Party of America, one of several groups known generically as the American Nazi Party. He won 56,006 votes in losing the race to former federal prosecutor Keith Snyder in Tuesday's primary.

—*Washington Star, May 8, 1980*

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The Pentagon cries wolf again

Poison gas gap

POISON GAS HAS, UNDERSTANDABLY, long suffered from a bad press. After both sides had managed to kill nearly 100,000 and injure more than one million people with this loathsome weapon in World War I, universal revulsion kept all the warring nations from using poison gas in World War II. Here at last a form of warfare had been discovered that seemed too vile for anyone to use. Not even Hitler, during the final weeks of his crumbling Reich, employed the fruits of Nazi research into gas warfare.

Most nations of the world signed the Geneva Convention in 1925 that prohibited gas warfare. It took fifty years for the United States to sign, and then only with the significant proviso that it reserved the right to use gas warfare in retaliation against any first use by others. Despite the proviso, gas warfare came into bad repute in 1969, when leaking gas stored by the U.S. Army accidentally killed over six thousand sheep in Utah. Since then there has been no live testing of new gas weapons, and our stockpiles have dwindled along with the Defense Department's chemical warfare bureaucracy.

And therein lies the rub. For just as in 1960 the Kennedy campaign discovered a "missile gap" (which turned out to be phony) needing instant correction, so the Pentagon has recently become alarmed about the poison gas gap. We have fallen behind the Russians in this critical part of our armamentarium. In accord with the Pentagon view that every conceivable weapon has to be matched or overmatched vis-à-vis the Russians, we are supposed to begin yet another long, expensive, and dangerous catch-up process.

Since we possess enough nuclear weapons to destroy the Russians many times over, why must we fill the poison gas gap? There are lots of grave problems with this weapon. It is dangerous even to store, as witness the six thousand dead sheep. In February of this year, the U.S. Army admitted that nearly a thousand leaks had occurred in its poison gas stockpile since 1967, with some of its personnel suffering mild poisoning. Poison gas cannot be confined to military targets; it necessarily attacks civilians indiscriminately and en masse. And poison gas has notorious boomerang effects, since the vagaries of wind and weather can easily waft the gas to the user's side in a conflict.

The United States has been trying to whip up enthusiasm and appropriations for poison gas production by pointing to recent uses of gas warfare by the Soviet Union and other Communist countries. None of the charges is backed by any hard evidence, with the possible exception of Vietnamese uses of poison gas in Cambodia. The case in Laos is especially flimsy, and it is not even clear who is supposed to have used gas there, the Laotian Communist regime or the Vietnamese troops who are thought to have wandered into the western part of the country.

More substantial charges have been levied against the Soviets in Afghanistan. For months Afghan refugees in Pakistan have talked about sickness raining from the sky, which hopeful U.S. intelligence sources have interpreted to be the nerve gas Soman. Instead, as pointed out in the *New Statesman*, all the seemingly authoritative reports have been based on the testimony of a single Afghan army officer who himself only heard the gas stories secondhand. Furthermore, it is likely that what the Afghans saw bursting in the air were not chemical bombs but regular bombs containing high explosives or phosphorus, which incorrectly exploded high above their targets.

Another datum is the fact that Russian trucks in Afghanistan have gas decontamination equipment. But of course the equipment could be there to guard against possible gas attacks on Russian forces. Indeed, the Russians have countered the American propaganda campaign with the disclosure that Afghan guerrillas have been captured carrying canisters of the poison gas CS, labeled Salisbury, Pennsylvania. It turns out, however, that even should the Russian charges prove true, the United States was not responsible for supplying poison gas to the Afghan guerrillas; the rebels had probably gotten the gas by a more indirect route. The United States had supplied the gas to our old friend the shah of Iran, and the leftover CS may well have been supplied by the ayatollah's regime to fellow Muslims battling in Afghanistan.

At any rate, even the State Department admits that there is only a fifty-fifty chance that the Soviets actually used poison gas in Afghanistan—certainly not enough evidence for a serious indictment. Meanwhile the United States hardly goes before the court of world opinion with clean hands. The defoliants that the United States sprayed in Vietnam apparently don't count, even though they caused illness, death, and possible birth defects in humans. They were, after all, intended to kill only vegetation, not people, and so they don't fall under the American interdict. A fine line, this. And, if we wished to pursue this logic, what makes napalm, used by the United States among numerous countries, any less noxious because it is a liquid chemical rather than a gas? It too should properly be rejected by all civilized people as another example of chemical warfare against civilians.

But even if the Soviets are eventually proved to have used poison gas, and even if the evidence holds up that the Vietnamese have engaged in toxic gas bombings in Cambodia, why does that mean that we should hasten to do the same or to counter every weapon in kind? Interestingly enough, not even the most ardent enthusiast for a U.S. stockpile of poison gas is worried about an enemy gas attack on the United States. Any attack on the United States would have to be a nuclear one, for which we have more than enough weapons to counterstrike. The alleged danger of poison gas is to NATO forces, against which the Soviets could possibly use gas war as a tactical advance guard for its troops.

Here American chemical warfare advocates have a real problem, for the West Germans, who would have to stockpile most of the gas, are singularly unenthusiastic about the entire

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prospect. They too were alarmed about those Utah sheep, and they have consistently refused to allow any more than a very small stockpile of chemical weapons on their territory. What is more, they have explicitly refused to train German troops in the use of gas weapons. The German government has sensibly argued that the gas could only kill civilians on a large scale, and yet could scarcely deter any sort of nuclear attack.

Surely, American policy should move in precisely the opposite direction. Rather than fill a poison gas gap, we should negotiate seriously with the Russians on their request for a treaty that would ban, once and for all, every use, as well as all production and stockpiling, of gas and other chemical weapons. Then, perhaps we could press on to prohibit the manufacture and stockpiling of all weapons of mass destruction, solid, gas, liquid, nuclear, or whatever. For in the last analysis, it is not the technology of weaponry that counts, but the effect on human life, particularly on the lives of innocent civilians of all countries.

Mob rule in Miami

Homicide squad

THE SAVAGERY OF MIAMI'S ANGRY black rioters seemed almost unearthly to the rest of the country. Even the most brutal of the 1960s race riots never approached the bloody dimensions of this one, as black mobs—in such numbers that police often stood by helplessly—beat and mutilated random whites.

To understand what could motivate human beings to such monstrous behavior, you would've had to have watched—as many south Floridians did on television—the trial of the five policemen charged with the murder of black insurance executive Arthur McDuffie and the subsequent cover-up. This is the story that unfolded through the testimony of policemen who witnessed McDuffie's death (three of them granted immunity from criminal prosecution for their testimony), medical examiners, and accident reconstruction experts:

McDuffie was riding a motorcycle through north Miami, speeding, in the early hours of December 17. When police spotted him and gave chase he tried to escape (probably because he was driving with a suspended license) and raced along at speeds over 100 mph, running several red lights. When he finally gave up there were fifteen policemen on the scene. They grabbed him, handcuffed him, then tore his motorcycle helmet off and began clubbing him with heavy steel flashlights, nightsticks, and boots. The cops were in such a frenzy to dispense instant justice that they actually began hitting one another with their flashlights. One patrolman finally ordered them to line up: "Wait a minute!" he shouted. "One at a time!" One of the cops straddled McDuffie and began swinging his flashlight straight down, like a mighty axe.

When the cops had finished with McDuffie, they went to work on his motorcycle to make it appear that there had been an accident; they smashed all its glass and plastic with their nightsticks and one of them drove a patrol car over it. Finally they called an ambulance. McDuffie went into a coma at the hospital and died four days later. A Dade County medical examiner testified that McDuffie died of six blows to the head delivered with a force "equivalent to falling four stories."

It is difficult to see how a jury could listen to this testimony and not return any convictions. But that's exactly what happened. Perhaps Floridians are inured to police violence; in this state cops have long run roughshod over blacks and whites alike. In the Miami area alone in 1979 there were three other highly publicized cases. Five narcotics officers broke into a house and beat a black schoolteacher senseless, only to discover they were at the wrong address; no action was taken against them. A black teenager urinating against a factory wall was shot to death by an off-duty policeman who first claimed he fired in self-defense and later changed his story to say the gun went off accidentally; no action was taken against him. And an eleven-year-old black girl was molested in the back of a patrol car by a Florida highway patrolman named Willie T. Jones, who subsequently got three years' probation.

Even the publicity surrounding the McDuffie case seems to have changed nothing; in nearby Fort Lauderdale, police laughingly refer to their flashlights as "McDuffies," and in Miami during the postverdict rioting the cops themselves looted a store and spraypainted slogans on some cars they thought might belong to looters. When the mayor complained, Police Chief Kenneth Harms merely noted that vandalism "was better than the taking of a life." In Florida the citizenry are supposed to feel grateful when police confine themselves to destruction of property rather than murder.

Clearly there will be no peace in Miami until officials decide to take a firm stand against police lawlessness. They could start by firing cops who have a history of brutal behavior—fourteen complaints had previously been lodged against one of the chief culprits in the McDuffie case—and warning the rest that they'll be prosecuted vigorously for violent behavior.

One course of action that should not be taken is for federal authorities to use civil rights statutes to reprosecute the policemen who were acquitted in the McDuffie case. As soon as the rioting broke out, Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti—ever alert for the chance to pick up some votes for his boss—announced a federal grand jury would hear several of the brutality cases, and the accused child-molester Jones was quickly indicted. Additional indictments for the McDuffie defendants seemed likely to follow.

The unfortunate fact is that these men have already faced a jury of their peers and been found guiltless. We may not like it—in fact, we ought to *despise* it—but that's the way the system was set up, and with good reason. Policemen accused of crimes are entitled to the same civil liberties safeguards as any other accused criminal, no matter how unpopular. When the Justice Department announced that it was going to reprosecute some Houston policemen who beat and drowned a drunken chicano and then got a mere wristslap in state court, the countercultural *Austin Sun* said of reprosecutions:

> It is rare that government bends the law to prosecute its own officers. It is the poor, the rebellious, the dissident, the minorities who must often confront doctored evidence, false accusations, spurious indictments and political prejudice. . . . If the Constitution is a chameleon, changing color according to circumstances, let me assure you it will not be the powerful and rich who suffer.

If the Miami policemen are convicted in a federal court, will it be on the strength of the evidence—or will it be because no jury will want to risk another three days of slaughter like the ones that followed the May verdict? To try the policemen again amounts to no more than mob law. Painful as it may be, we must let them go. Otherwise we're dispensing punishment without due process—which is, after all, exactly what those policemen did to Arthur McDuffie last December.

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LETTERS

Letters to the editor should be addressed to INQUIRY Magazine, 747 Front St., San Francisco, California 94111. The editors reserve the right to edit letters for length when necessary.

Sex and desire

THE ESSAY BY JOHN GORDON, "On Sex and Sexism" [May 5, 1980], is a fine piece from "the other side," a side we seldom hear these days. Let him not despair: There are some of us afflicted by "plain old lust" and not ashamed of it either. It is a shame that some feminists seek to punish men for *their* masochistic fantasies, or to condemn all males for the sins and excesses of a few. Sex should be the one refuge in life where male and female power plays are cast aside in favor of two human beings simply attempting to please one another, and never mind who's on top as long as it's voluntary.

I agree that men too have been brutalized; sometimes, though, it's difficult to pity the Conqueror. As power and influence get more evenly distributed in society, it will be much easier to sympathize. Of course nowadays, women who stay at the bottom have no one to blame but themselves. Thank you for a marvelous, eye-opening five minutes.

CHRISTINE DORFFI
Santa Barbara, Calif.

The feminist fringe

I HAVE MY DOUBTS THAT JOHN Gordon is quite the feminist sympathizer he presents himself as being, but he is dead right about the pornography issue. I saw the same—or a similar—slide show here and came away with the same impressions.

My fear is that the feminist movement is dying and that the fight against pornography is one of its dying throes. It certainly can't do our movement any good.

I find it impossible to offer any criticism of the movement to those rabidly involved in this—the people are so "gone" that they think you just don't see the issues as clearly as they do. I've largely gotten out of it, but it isn't because I don't care deeply about women's rights or am afraid of controversy. It's just that there is no place for a person like me any more. I would bet nationwide that a lot of people like myself have left the movement. The crazies are taking it over.

DANA TUETH MOTLEY
Champaign, Ill.

The state as male

AS A COMMITTED FEMINIST I was annoyed to see a second article so soon taking on Women Against Pornography. Why the editorial overkill?

Women Against Pornography's excesses should not be used as an excuse to ignore the fact that state violence is largely male violence. That men control the state. That many more men than women are willing to use violence to obtain their ends.

Those of us who would eliminate violence and the violent state must be willing to take on macho, dominating attitudes and behavior in every area of life. Why can't *INQUIRY* publish thoughtful articles on the causes of authoritarian attitudes and male (and female) violence instead of wasting space self-righteously defending male honor against one overzealous little group?

CAROL MOORE
New York, N.Y.

The victim as female

JOHN GORDON IS OUT OF HIS depth, or more precisely, out of his culture. What he sees as the hysterical dramatics of the Women Against Pornography slide show/lecture, feminists see as the only way to confront an androcentric culture on a small budget. It may be that the only way to instigate a boycott of pornography and an ostracism of pornographers and their customers is to let the furies fly. Yes, it would be unfortunate if this endangered First Amendment freedoms.

However, it has been woman's misfortune to suffer genital mutilation (Africa, the Middle East, the United States), foot binding (China), sacrificial burning (India, Europe, New England), unnecessary surgery, radiation, and medication, misogynist therapy built around notions of penis envy, gynocidal religions built around the idea of woman's responsibility for sin, her impurity, her inevitable pain, and less than equal economic and educational opportunities.

Now they must suffer John Gordon, who "hopes" for liberation but offers no constructive criticism, no alternative tactics or strategy. I suggest the next time Gordon writes an article with a philosophical title like "On Sex and Sexism," it be about philosophy. If Susan Brownmiller's *Against Our Will,* or Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* isn't scholarly enough for him, let him work with Mary Daly's *Gyn/Ecology* or Adrienne Rich's *Motherhood As Institution And Experience.*

BRUCE PALMER
Washington, D.C.

Presidential delusions

IN REGARD TO "JIMMY Carter's Astounding Lies" [May 5, 1980]: That poor, undersized creature in the White House would seem to be suffering from two fatal diseases: 1) An identity crisis—today he is Franklin Roosevelt, tomorrow John Kennedy, and at this current writing, the macho Lyndon Johnson. He apparently has no valid personal identity; 2) The curious or perhaps childlike ability to believe his own lies. Of course, if this be true—they really are not lies, are they? Certainly not when his stooges agree. Alas! The king has no clothes and the spindly shanks and knobby knees do show.

GWEN H. WUELLER
New Bloomfield, Pa.

Thanks

WITH REGARD TO YOUR "Word" in the May 5 issue, the Third Great Lie, as any woman on your staff would have told you, is, "Sure, honey, I'll respect you in the morning."

Thanks for a great magazine.

NINA GASPICH
Chicago, Ill.

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FIRST AMENDMENT WATCH

NAT HENTOFF

Yes, Virginia, there is a Sabbath

OF THE FIRST THIRTEEN states, none was as fiercely concerned as Virginia that every citizen be able to freely exercise his religion—or be able to freely profess no religion at all. George Mason, James Madison, and Thomas Jefferson would not yield on the question of religious liberty, first in their state's own constitution and then in the First Amendment to the national Constitution.

In that lead section of the Bill of Rights there are two clauses concerning the relationship between the state and religion. First, there shall be "no law respecting an establishment of religion." As distilled by Justice William O. Douglas, the many cases involving this "establishment" clause teach that it "forbids the State to employ its facilities or funds in a way that gives any church, or all churches, greater strength in our society than it would have by relying on its members alone." Or, as Jefferson put it, there must be "a wall of separation between Church and State." From time to time the High Court has allowed cracks in that wall, but by and large, the separation has been as the Framers desired it to be.

The second clause forbids any law "prohibiting the free exercise" of religion. Or, as the relevant part of the Virginia state constitution—written by Madison and Jefferson—puts it, no one "shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief . . ."

NAT HENTOFF writes a monthly column on civil liberties for INQUIRY. His book, The First Freedom: A Tumultuous History of Free Speech in America, *has been published recently by Delacorte.*

For much of this year, a battle has been underway in Virginia in which two young Jewish women claim they are indeed being made to suffer because of their religious beliefs.

Susan and Lynn Stein, twins, are seniors at W. T. Woodson High School in Fairfax County. They are among twelve Jews in a graduating class of 504. They are also Orthodox Jews. Accordingly, from sunset of Friday to nightfall on Saturday, they observe the Fourth Commandment: Hallow the Sabbath. As Isaiah put it: On that day, "go not your ways nor look to your affairs." It is a day for home and the synagogue. Or, in the words of Abraham Joshua Heschel: "It is a day when we are called upon to share in what is eternal in time, to turn away from the results of creation to the mystery of creation; from the

world of creation to the creation of the world."

School officials of Fairfax County set graduation exercises this year for Saturday, June 7. For the Stein sisters to have attended, they would have had to violate their religious beliefs. Starting in January, the sisters petitioned for a change in the date. Their request was denied by the principal, the superintendent of their school area, the superintendent of schools for all of Fairfax County, and the School Board. After all, said Rodney F. Page, chairman of that board, we cannot change our plans for just "an ordinary Sabbath."

At that point, the Stein sisters realized how little Christians actually know about Judaism. "In our religion," Lynn said, "there is no such thing as an *ordinary* Sabbath. Under Jewish law, the Sabbath is the holiest of days. It takes precedence over all other holy days."

For all the good it does her, Lynn Stein is right. For many Orthodox Jews even Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, is not as holy as each Saturday. "Jewish spiritual history," writes Rabbi Morris Kertzer, has been "virtually a series of weekdays spent in preparation for the Sabbath."

HAVING EXHAUSTED ALL administrative remedies, the Stein sisters went to court. Their lawyers argued that the graduation exercises are a once-in-a-lifetime event "sponsored and offered by the state as a privilege and significant benefit" to public school graduates. Though attendance is voluntary, these ceremonies "are an integral part of the educational process," constituting "the culmination of four years' work and study." The school "encourages all students to attend" this "rite of passage," and the great majority do, for it marks "the commencement of a new phase in their lives."

For the Steins, moreover, graduation would have been a particularly significant event. They were among five graduating seniors who had qualified as valedictorians by achieving straight As throughout high school; "each would be entitled to special recognition in the course of the ceremonies, including public announcement of their status as valedictorians, a distinctive cape on their graduation gowns, and prominent seating at the front of the graduating class."

The various court papers noted that other Woodson students did not have to violate their religious observances in order to attend graduation. The vast majority are Christian, and graduation ceremonies are not held Sunday morning "in order to properly accommodate the religious observance of Sunday worshippers."

The sisters' lawyers also emphasized without rebuttal from school officials that the only reason given for scheduling graduation on Saturday morning—for years, it had taken place on Sunday night—was "administrative convenience." The sizable number of volunteers involved, said the principal, preferred an unbroken weekend after Saturday morning, rather than having to return early Sunday afternoon to prepare for an evening graduation.

Was the First Amendment, asked the Steins' lawyers, to be subordinated to "administrative convenience"? And, paraphrasing a section from the Sup-

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reme Court's decision in *Brown* v. *Board of Education*, they went on to charge that if these sisters were to be separated "from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their religion," the result would be "a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone."

On April 24, in the Circuit Court of Fairfax County, Judge Thomas Middleton handed down his decision. He agreed that graduation is a once-in-a-lifetime event, and he clearly sympathized with the young women. Furthermore, the judge also agreed with their lawyers that in a clash between "administrative convenience" and the First Amendment, the former would fall. But is this indeed a First Amendment case? For the state to be found guilty of violating someone's religious beliefs, said the judge, requires a showing of some sort of state compulsion. And he could find none in this situation.

TO BE SURE, THE SUIT OF the Stein sisters against the Fairfax County School Board and Woodson's principal, Robert Phipps, is one of "first impression." That is, there has never before been a case dealing specifically with the constitutionality of scheduling a graduation ceremony on the Jewish Sabbath when there are Orthodox Jews in the class. Nonetheless, there has been considerable "free exercise" case law dealing with claims by Jews, Seventh-Day Adventists, and other adherents of minority religions that certain statutes have conflicted with their right to exercise their beliefs: the denial of unemployment compensation, for example, to a Seventh-Day Adventist who would not work Saturdays. Some of these cases have been won by the complainant, and others have been lost. But always there has been state compulsion.

In this case, said Judge Middleton, there was no compulsion. Attending graduation is a voluntary act. If you don't go, you still get your diploma. There is no penalty for not attending. Absent coercion, said the judge, there is no constitutional basis for deciding that the First Amendment rights of these "obviously intelligent young ladies" with "strong religious beliefs" have been violated.

At this point, a goodly number of the Steins' classmates in the back of the courtroom whooped in jubilation, slapping each others' hands in delight at the defeat of the Jews. Throughout the attempts by Lynn and Susan to change the graduation date, majority sentiment in the high school had been decidedly against them. In one robustly majoritarian article in the school paper, a student had charged: "Two Orthodox Jews have decided they want to change the plans, schedule, and costs of the graduation ceremony for thousands of Fairfax County high school senior students by imposing their personal religious beliefs on the public school system of the United States of America."

When the judge ruled against the Steins, their classmates whooped in jubilation.

But this celebration of the pain being suffered by the two sisters, who sat weeping, was too much for one of their lawyers. Approaching the bench, he told the judge that because none of the high school's teachers or administrators had informed the students of the sisters' fundamental right to bring the issue to court, the Steins, from the start, had been the targets of verbal abuse—culminating in this display of triumphant mockery.

Calling the court back to order, Judge Middleton spoke directly to the students and informed them that "these ladies have a Constitutional right to come before this Court and ask for the relief they sought. It is one of the greatest principles of our law that the observance of religious freedom is an absolute Constitutional right."

Of course, Lynn and Susan did lose, nonetheless. But they had a right to lose. They also have a right to appeal, and they did—to the Supreme Court of Virginia. As of this writing, the odds are they will lose there too, and will not attend their graduation. The sisters will then go to the Supreme Court of the United States.

BUT HOW CAN THEY WIN IF there has been no explicit state action forcing them to choose between their religion and some public benefit or privilege? Their lawyers insist that, contrary to Judge Middleton in the circuit court, there is case law holding that there need not be state compulsion to prove state violation of an individual's free exercise of religion.

They cite a 1960 case, *Torcaso* v. *Watkins*, in which Mr. Torcaso had been held ineligible to serve as a notary public in Maryland because he refused to take an oath professing "his belief in the existence of God." The highest court in Maryland had ruled against Torcaso, stating that he "is not compelled to believe or disbelieve, under threat of punishment or other compulsion. True, unless he makes the declaration of belief, he cannot hold public office in Maryland, but he is not compelled to hold office."

The U.S. Supreme Court reversed this ruling, with Mr. Justice Black emphasizing: "The fact, however, that a person is not compelled to hold public office cannot possibly be an excuse for barring him from office by state-imposed criteria forbidden by the Constitution." Just like the Stein sisters' case, say her attorneys.

"Ingenious, but wrong," as my Greek teacher used to say when we would improvise answers to one of his sudden oral tests. There *was* state compulsion in *Torcaso*. If he refused to violate his religious, or irreligious, beliefs, he was barred from public office. But by not attending graduation, the Stein sisters are not barred from getting their diplomas or any of their academic credits. They lose an experience. A very important one, but is a single experience—even though a culmination of twelve years of school—equal to losing all chance to hold public office in a state?

The other citations by the sisters' lawyers also do not get to the core of this particular dilemma. For instance, a key Sabbatarian case, *Sherbert* v. *Verner* (1963), involved that Seventh-Day Adventist who refused to take a Saturday job and so was denied unemployment compensation by South Carolina. The Supreme Court decided in the Seventh-Day Adventist's favor because forcing her to choose between unemployment benefits and her religious tenets placed an unconstitutional burden on her freedom to exercise her religious beliefs.

A brief for the Stein sisters says: "There was no legal compulsion for accepting or taking unemployment compensation benefits in *Sherbert*. The

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practice was declared invalid because the state was conditioning a significant benefit to its citizens upon their forfeiting their right to the free exercise of their religious beliefs. This is precisely the same situation involved in this [the Steins'] case."

I would hate to carry that particular line of reasoning in oral argument before the Supreme Court. Technically, state coercion in *Sherbert* may have been indirect, but coercion it surely was. A law of the state of South Carolina had disqualified from benefits anyone who turned down a job "without good cause." And it was a state agency, the unemployment compensation commission, which had ruled that having religious scruples against Saturday work was not "good cause."

IF THE STEIN SISTERS ARE ultimately to win the right to prevent Saturday morning graduations—if not in time for themselves, then for others—it may well have to be through a somewhat different line of argument: Even if there is no compulsion by way of a particular state law, the "free exercise" can be abridged if the pressures brought by agents of the state are so severe as to be equivalent in impact to statutory compulsion.

Granted that a high-school graduation exercise is voluntary, but granted also that it is a significant, once-in-a-lifetime event. In that context, is it not coercion, even without a statute, to force these sisters to waive their rights to free exercise of religion if they want to attend their own graduation?

Here, a comment in the Supreme Court ruling in *Sherbert* is partly in order: "not only is it apparent that appellant's . . . ineligibility for benefits derives solely from the practice of her religion, *but the pressure upon her to forego that practice is unmistakable.*" (Emphasis added.)

Is it constitutionally sufficient for public school authorities, citing only "administrative convenience," to put that kind of pressure on these students? Is this not state action? Even though attendance is not compulsory, graduation is clearly a privilege and benefit of the state, attended by the overwhelming majority of students. And it indeed marks an important stage of their lives, and is so remembered as long as they live.

Furthermore, is it not proof of unconstitutional majoritarian discrimination against a minority that in Fairfax County, graduation ceremonies are never held on Sunday morning so as not to interfere with Christian worship services? Does not the contrast between the treatment afforded the Stein sisters and this deference to the Christian holy day by an agency of the state amount to violation of the establishment clause of the First Amendment—precisely contrary to the fervent intent of Madison, Jefferson, and others of the Framers?

If Sunday morning is so sacred that secular events like public school graduation ceremonies are not allowed to intrude upon it, then how in the Constitution can the Stein sisters be forced to choose between *their* holiest day of the year and their graduation ceremony?

Well, whatever happens, Susan and Lynn Stein feel good about one thing. A young boy, reading about them in the local paper, wrote them a note. "I want to thank you," he said, "for making me proud that I'm Jewish."

I rather think James Madison of Virginia would have been proud of them too—for not kneeling to the majority, and for wielding the First Amendment instead.

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ROBERT KLEIN

Veterans as guinea pigs

A LIST OF EXAMPLES OF medical experimentation on humans at Veterans Administration hospitals reads like a captured Nazi science document with a distinctly American accent.

At the Cleveland VA Medical Center, Bob McGraw was never informed of the possible side effects of the massive daily dosages of experimental female hormones he was given in 1968. "During this time," McGraw, a pseudonymous forty-year-old Vietnam veteran, remembers, "I noticed gradual changes in my body, and some increase in secondary female characteristics. My breasts enlarged slightly, my male sex organs decreased in size, and my sexual drive dropped off. I was also extremely depressed. . . ." McGraw, in the hospital at the time for treatment of a bone break, doesn't recall signing a consent form. "I was not told anything about this experiment," he says. "I felt used."

At the North Chicago VA Medical Center, Walter L., an emotionally distressed combat veteran, was enrolled in a research project in 1979 and given eight electroshock treatments within a ten-day period. Despite written VA guidelines which insist that "consent for electro-convulsive therapy must be obtained from the patient's next-of-kin" when the patient is deemed unable to function with some degree of lucidity, neither L. nor his family signed any such statement. L. claims that his signature on one consent form was in fact forged. In any case, doctors acknowledge that he was out of touch with his surroundings when he allegedly signed the paper.

Dr. Gary Almy, chief of psychiatric services at North Chicago and the experiment's director, has told reporters that the patient consent forms "are screwed up" and need to be rewritten to specify the required information. He adds, however, that other procedures exist to protect patients' rights. L., meanwhile, is still depressed, which was what the electroshock therapy—the application of electric current to the brain via electrodes attached to the head—was supposed to relieve. He has not worked since being hospitalized. Walter L. has filed a $150,000 class action suit against the Veterans Administration.

At the VA clinic on North Broadway in Los Angeles, Joseph Naliwaika, a World War II veteran, was asked to test a new medication for gaining weight. At first, he did very well—the drug apparently helped to restore his waning vim and vigor. Then, after a few months of this regimen, "the bottom dropped out." Suddenly, and without warning, Naliwaika got severe stomach pains and began passing blood through his bowels.

He was taken to the Wadsworth VA hospital, a gleaming six-story white structure with a lobby reminiscent of a Miami Beach hotel. Naliwaika was admitted as an emergency patient and underwent extensive surgery. When he woke up the next morning, he found surgical stitching that started under his breastbone and ended a half-inch below his navel. Gone were his spleen, an ulcer, and part of his pancreas.

Naliwaika, now 65, never signed a consent form, nor was he ever told that any potential risks or side effects might occur while the drug was being tested. He was told that the medicine was potent, but regular physical checkups made by the research physician revealed no reported abnormalities.

"I feel that the doctor should have given me more information about this drug, told me the name and explained more about the potential consequences of taking it," says Naliwaika in a sworn statement documenting the charges.

ALL THREE MEN—BOB McGraw, Walter L., and Joseph Naliwaika—are part of a growing constituency that is loudly demanding stricter observance of a basic right: to be fully and honestly informed about what is being done to one's own body, and to be able to call a halt when the invasion is unacceptable.

What makes the issue even more urgent is the nature of the circumstances under which these abuses are taking place. Although the concerns go beyond the bureaucratic confines of the VA—the failure to obtain informed consent does not occur only among those in the employ of the veterans' agency—researchers at that federal outpost are assured a steady, tractable stream of experimental material by virtue of the VA's turnstile patient population of some three million. Potentially, all thirty million veterans of American military service are eligible for VA medical care.

The patients who become fodder for these research efforts are, like most VA consumers, individuals who by and large have no viable alternative to the medical care available as part of their veterans benefits. The VA's own statistics show that approximately 70 percent of its patients have no medical insurance. A 1975 study revealed that of those under sixty-five who applied for VA health care, only 17 percent had health insurance of any kind, compared with 81 percent of all veterans under sixty-five. In general, users of VA medical services are older, poorer, and less likely to be married.

The unspoken pressures put on VA patients make informed consent 'nothing but a farce.'

"Imagine the unspoken—and, sometimes, very obvious—pressures brought on these patients when they're asked to participate in an experiment," says investigator Tom Armistead. "A lot of them say yes out of fear of being tossed out, rather than any desire to become part of a research project. Informed consent under those conditions is nothing but a farce." And those are just the ones who are offered a choice at all. Some are apparently never given the chance to make any choice, informed or otherwise.

Armistead, son of a retired Air Force colonel, was the director of the Los Angeles–based Institute for the Study of Medical Ethics, a nonprofit clearinghouse set up to ferret out and stop medi-

ROBERT KLEIN, a journalist in Albuquerque, has recently completed a study of VA medical care that will be published by Macmillan.

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cal abuses of patients wherever and however they occur. Now, armed with piles of notarized affidavits alleging informed consent violations, including those of Bob McGraw and Joseph Naliwaika, Armistead is working to get safeguard legislation implemented in states like New York and Illinois. In 1978, the institute was instrumental in obtaining passage of a California law which for the first time made informed consent uniformly a precondition for participation in a medical experiment.

Armistead originally learned about the extent of informed consent abuses when he placed a small ad in a Los Angeles newspaper. The immediate response contained a flood of complaints about the VA.

The extent of research activities at the VA can be measured by the fact that for the past five years alone, medical research funds have been budgeted at a total of more than $500 million, about one dollar for every fifty dollars spent for patient care. (In 1979, the VA allocated $5.4 billion for medical care.)

In one year, one researcher at the VA's largest medical/surgical facility, in Long Beach, California, was associated with no fewer than forty-one research projects; he is listed as principal investigator in thirty-seven of them. And, during a two month period in 1975, some 17,500 VA patients altogether were brought into research projects. An NAS study done at the time suggests that although signed consent forms were in each patient's medical chart, 28 percent of the participants in the experiments were unaware they had agreed to take part in a medical research study, and another 20 percent had "very little or no idea" of the purpose of the research.

This same study notes that on several of its early site visits to targeted VA facilities, "it appeared that [recently revamped] newer, more restrictive guidelines had not been disseminated or put into operation at some hospitals." The NAS committee expressed "concern about the adequacy of procedures" used by the VA for the protection of patients participating in experiments.

*DESPITE ALL THE STUD-*ies, admonitions, and lawsuits (not to mention anguish), the VA is still abusing the rights of its research subjects, many of whom aren't even aware they have been informed about anything, much less consented to it. Amazingly, the VA has admitted as much, although not publicly.

Writing in the March 22, 1979, Circular 10-79-58, an intermittently published memo sent to selected staff throughout the VA and for internal distribution only, Dr. Donald Custis, deputy chief medical director (now chief medical director), summarized the "most frequently identified inspector general audit deficiencies." The audit, Custis explains, "is an assessment of how well VA medical centers comply with established agency guidelines in accomplishing assigned missions."

Deficiencies uncovered by the VA inspector general are serious and well-documented. Number eight, as listed in Dr. Custis's memorandum, reads,

> Controls should be strengthened to ensure proper completion and maintenance of consent forms. In many instances, these forms are either not being completed or only partially completed. For example—the operation and/or procedure to be performed is not written in layman's terms [as required]. Without an appropriately completed form, the Medical Center cannot be assured that the patient fully understands and voluntarily gives informed consent.

Charges of "guinea pig" medical care have dogged the VA ever since President Herbert Hoover signed Executive Order 5398, on July 21, 1930, establishing it as a separate, independent agency. Even early congressional supporters and veterans groups warned against the VA becoming an arena for unchecked research and experimentation on relatively defenseless and uninformed patients. These concerns turned to alarm when, in the mid-1940s, the nation's medical schools became affiliated, full-partner teaching components of the VA's burgeoning hospital system. Critics were especially troubled that with the influx of relatively untrained medical students, the VA's mandated priority, treatment and care, would be sacrificed to the learning requirements of the doctors-in-training.

Today, the charge of guinea pig treatment has come to encompass far more than nonconsensual research. Other allegations are: treatment performed by medical students, lack of a thorough explanation for the purposes and expected results of clinically required surgery, unsupervised surgery performed by doctors who have not completed their formal training, and, some contend, medical care not carried out by medical doctors, fully trained or otherwise.

Historically, those patients lumped together as "psychiatrically disabled" have been the ones most often recruited to bear the brunt of many so-called advances in medicine. This has been true at the VA and elsewhere; the slice of a knife into brain tissue was once as common—and still is in some places—as the dispensing of Thorazine is today. Frequently those least able to defend themselves or even to know what was happening, "psychotic" veterans truly gave double-duty to their country—but only once voluntarily.

Psychosurgery, the excision of certain areas of the brain, was pioneered by the VA in the early 1940s, using psychiatric subjects in the experimental procedure. Headlines subsequently told of psychiatric patients hospitalized at the Bronx VA—immortalized by *Life* magazine as a "medical slum"—who were unwitting subjects in CIA-sponsored LSD experiments. Schizophrenic alcoholics at the Sheridan, Wyoming, VA facility received experimental dosages of LSD in the 1960s.

So the issue of informed-consent abuses, though not articulated as such in the early days, has been around for a long while, but treated as just one of many problems of the giant agency.

At last, VA patients are fighting back.

"I have no recollection of their mentioning any risks or side effects on the consent form," one southern California veteran swears in an affidavit, alleging further that his own private doctor was "shocked" when he saw the aftereffects of his patient's participation in a stress study that involved dropping a magnet down his stomach. Suffering from severe dehydration, the patient lost a week's work because of the experiment.

And another veteran who inadvertently learned twenty-three years after the fact that he had been a subject in an electroshock experiment conducted by the VA, has also filed a sworn statement with the hope of gaining some recompense for his years of pain, if not for his unmeasured sense of loss of dignity and invasion of privacy.

"I have suffered great mental anguish because of the electric shocks," says the sixty-year-old Los Angeles resident. "I feel my basic human rights were violated. The VA hospital treated me like a piece of meat, like a subject, not a human being. No person should be treated like a guinea pig."

"The purpose of medical research," Dr. Rosalyn Yalow, a researcher with the VA and winner of the Nobel Prize in medicine in 1977, once noted, "is not to work on the birds and bees. The purpose is to make lives more comfortable." The pain and anguish suffered involuntarily by so many veterans at the hands of the VA makes this a truth far removed from the *medicus practicus* of the Veterans Administration. ❑

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How the Donkey and the Elephant Turned into Pigs

Public financing of presidential campaigns sounded like a splendid anticorruption reform. But all it's ever amounted to is a splendid feed for Democrats and Republicans at the expense of everyone.

By Mary Meehan

AH, DEAR TAXPAYER! YOU MAY WANT TO sit back and take a deep breath before you read about the latest ways in which your money is being used. You may want to go further. Depending on your politics, you might take a tranquilizer or down a good stiff drink.

This year you have helped George Bush rent his presidential campaign headquarters, pay his staff, and compensate his media people. You have given money for John Anderson's futile Republican campaign. You have helped Jimmy Carter and Edward Kennedy pay their staffs, their pollsters, their media mavens, and even the firms that remove the trash from their national headquarters. You have contributed toward Ronald Reagan's campaign plane, his car rentals, and his hotel bills.

We are only part way through what promises to be a long and expensive election year. After you've given your share of the $27 million or so of federal matching funds to candidates running in the primaries, you'll have a chance to help foot the bill for the major parties' national conventions. Let's be more precise: not merely the "chance," but the obligation and the civic duty to do so. If you refuse, the IRS may give you a hard time and may—if you become downright obstinate and belligerent—send you to jail. Undoubtedly this prospect will remind you of your civic duty, so that you'll join with all of your fellow taxpayers—including independents, Socialist Workers, American Independents, and Citizens party folks—in paying some $13 million in all for the Democratic and Republican national conventions. You can sit right there in front of your TV set for the gavel-to-gavel coverage, secure in the knowledge that the conventions couldn't happen without your support. Willing or unwilling.

Then, after the conventions, you'll pay for the fall campaigns of the Republican and Democratic tickets. Whichever side wins, you can justly feel that you have invested in its cause—willingly or unwillingly, with your fellow taxpayers—to the tune of nearly $30 million for each ticket. (And you've made these contributions even if you didn't check off the dollar on your income tax return for the Presidential Election Campaign Fund. The funds for presidential campaigns are drawn from the general treasury, so each taxpayer contributes. The checkoff gives the appearance, but not the reality, of voluntary action.)

And that's not all. Along the way, whenever you open your mailbox and find a fund-raising appeal from the Democratic National Committee or your state Republican committee, you should read it with special interest. Because you helped pay for that, too, through a postal subsidy of $4 million for major-party committees.

If all of this fails to leave you with a positively philanthropic glow, just consider the grand total: roughly $120 million in tax money for the candidates, conventions, and junk mail of the Republican and Democratic parties. You should feel very generous. Or very something.

How, you may ask, did all of this happen? How did the two parties get their feet in the door and their snouts in the trough? Public financing of parties and campaigns seems to be a most un-Republican idea, yet it was Teddy Roosevelt who first proposed it way back in 1907. Nothing came of his idea at the time, but later enthusiasts of public financing declared that it was the only way to make politicians independent of "special interests," the only way to prevent the buying and selling of

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government favors. With the stench of Watergate still wafting through the air, in 1974 this reasoning appealed to many.

To those more familiar with how the federal government really works, however, it misses the point. As long as the human race survives there will be a certain amount of corruption, and it can never be completely stamped out no matter how hard reformers try. Far more dangerous than the corruption is the zeal with which reformers are likely to trample over freedom and civil liberties in their efforts to purify the system. The corruption of money, in this view, is not nearly as serious as the corruption of power.

It can also be argued, quite convincingly, that what makes corruption flourish on such a wide scale is the size of the government. In 1974, then Representative David Dennis, an Indiana Republican, argued against public funding: "The trouble with this country and the reason we have special-interest money running it . . . is that we have made the government too big and too powerful, and every single person in this country who has two nickels, or a business, or a farm, has to come down here and beg for permission to live. And naturally they try to pay the bureaucrats and the politicians off." Others have noted that the most flagrant and numerous examples of efforts to buy politicians have occurred in the heavily regulated and heavily subsidized industries: oil, airlines, milk, maritime, and so on. Remove the heavy dependence on the government, say the opponents of big government, and you will remove the incentive to buy politicians.

Most liberals and Democrats could not buy these arguments without seriously questioning their standard philosophy and operating principles of the past forty years. For them, subsidizing parties and campaigns seems a natural thing; after all, they have been subsidizing everything else in sight for decades and have done very well politically as a result. As the Republicans have (sourly) observed, "You can't shoot Santa Claus." Since nearly everyone else is feeding at the public trough, the Democrats reason, why should anyone notice if the political parties casually belly up for their share?

DESPITE REPUBLICAN OPPOSITION, A program of limited public funding passed Congress in 1966. Later, however, it was suspended, and still later passed again in different form, but not allowed to take effect until 1973. Watergate and its aftermath, skillfully used by public-funding proponents, finally ended the uncertainty. The Federal Election Campaign Act amendments of 1974, which drastically overhauled federal election law, provided matching-fund subsidies for Democrats and Republicans running in presidential primaries; also $2 million each for the Democratic and Republican conventions and $20 million each for the Democratic and Republican nominees for President.

Republicans, and some conservative Democrats, fought hard but unsuccessfully to knock public funding out of the bill. In the House, Representative Bill Frenzel, a Minnesota Republican, temporarily succeeded in his effort to eliminate convention funding from the bill; but then the Democrats demanded a second vote, lined up their troops, brought in their heavy artillery (Robert Strauss), and fought the issue to a tie vote. The Democratic Speaker of the House then broke the tie in favor of public funding for conventions. The Democrats were almost desperate for money because they were heavily in debt and disadvantaged in fund-raising by their temporary exile from the White House.

Once the Democrats won the crucial vote on convention funding, everything was downhill for the Republicans. Their own President, Gerald Ford, signed the bill despite his constitutional doubts, apparently because he thought that in an election year a veto would be too great a liability for his party—already saddled with the Nixon pardon. But by signing the bill, he saddled politics with limits on contributions and spending that severely curtail freedom of speech and the right to organize. Those limits are the other side of the subsidy coin. Although most Republicans didn't like either side of the coin, after the subsidies were established they made sure that they got just as much money as the Democrats.

Once the concept of public funding was firmly established in federal law, it was Katie bar the door. The political subsidies, like most subsidies, quickly ballooned and developed a strong constituency of their own. It was a constituency of party professionals—quiet, but all the more effective for being quiet. And it did not have to work very hard in any case, because cost-of-living increases had been written into the 1974 law for the convention and general-election subsidies. Occasionally observers note that the very people in Washington who are most responsible for inflationary policies manage to insulate themselves from the effects of those policies. In this case, however, the insulation has not been completely effective because costs of such campaigning essentials as television advertising and chartered airplane travel have exploded in recent years; bad as inflation is generally, it is even worse in politics.

FEDERAL ELECTION HANDOUTS, 1976

	(millions)
Matching funds for primary candidates	$23.6
Convention grant, Democrats	2.0
Convention grant, Republicans	1.6
Convention security assistance grant, New York City	2.6
Convention security assistance grant, Kansas City	2.4
General election grant, Jimmy Carter	21.8
General election grant, Gerald Ford	21.8
Total	$75.8

*The estimates for the 1980 conventions assume that each party will use 75 percent of its entitlement.

The cost-of-living increase, left to itself, would have raised the convention subsidy for each party from $2 million to nearly $3 million this year. But when party professionals reached the conclusion that even this might not be enough to meet rising costs—or rising expectations—their friends on the Hill came to the rescue. In the 1979 "technical amendments" to the election act, they inserted a provision raising the basic convention subsidy to $3 million. So the cost-of-living increase now brings the total subsidy up to $4.4 million for each convention. (This doesn't even include projected security-assistance grants to the cities hosting the conventions. More on that later.) Congress has not increased the basic subsidy for the Republican and Democratic nominees in the general election, but the cost-of-living escalator means that each will receive $29.4 million this year. One suspects that they can make do with that amount.

While the old subsidies were increasing in volume, a new one was added. In 1978 the two parties, acting through their representatives in Congress, voted themselves a special postal subsidy. The new subsidy passed Congress easily and quietly, with scarcely any opposition from Republicans. GOP members

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probably realized that they stood to benefit far more from the postal subsidy than did the Democrats, simply because their direct-mail program was far larger and more profitable. Both parties did, however, make one slight error. Through a mistake in drafting, they neglected to exclude minority parties from the postal subsidy. This oversight was quickly remedied by the next session of Congress, which voted to take the subsidy away from minority parties.

TO UNDERSTAND THE PROFOUND EFFECTS the subsidies have on American politics, it is necessary to look at each program in more detail. First, the matching-funds program: To become eligible, a candidate must find at least twenty people who will contribute at least $250 each to his campaign, in each of at least twenty states—a total of 400 contributors. This is easy for an incumbent President, a household name like Edward Kennedy, or a candidate like Ronald Reagan who has been around the track several times with solid popular support. It is not easy for anyone else.

Once a candidate has proved to the Federal Election Commission that he has met the magic 20/$250/20 formula, the FEC certifies his eligibility and the U.S. Treasury starts matching—dollar for dollar—each contribution of $250 or less. The matching grants continue as long as the candidate does not fall below 10 percent of the vote in two consecutive primaries. But there are two other hitches: The candidate must agree to abide by spending limits and to meet difficult record-keeping requirements. Alone of the 1980 major-party candidates, John Connally decided that the game wasn't worth the candle; he did not apply for matching funds.

FEDERAL ELECTION HANDOUTS, 1979-80	(millions)
Matching funds for primary candidates (*estimate*)	$27.0
Convention grant, Democrats (*estimate*)*	3.3
Convention grant, Republicans (*estimate*)*	3.3
Convention security assistance grant, New York City (*approval pending*)	3.5
Convention security assistance grant, Detroit (*approval pending*)	3.5
General election grant, Democratic nominee	29.4
General election grant, Republican nominee	29.4
Postal subsidy	21.3
Total	$120.7

The election law and FEC regulations appear to exclude an independent presidential candidate from access to matching funds. Because of this, John Anderson actually returned $300,000 in matching funds to the government after he shifted from the Republican primaries to an independent campaign. Constitutional lawyers believe that there is a strong equal-protection case to be made against the exclusion of independents. At this writing, however, Anderson has not tested the issue in the courts—perhaps because [as noted by Eugene J. McCarthy in a box on the next page] such a test would raise embarrassing questions about why he supported discrimination against independents when he voted for the Federal Election Campaign Act. Minority-party candidates in contested races might be able to obtain matching funds, but few could meet the 20/$250/20 threshold. The long and short of it is that only Republicans and Democrats have received matching funds since the program began.

Fourteen presidential candidates (two Republicans and twelve Democrats) received a total of nearly $23.6 million in matching funds for the 1976 primaries. Another Democrat, Governor Milton Shapp of Pennsylvania, received $299,000 in matching funds in 1976 but had to pay it back to the government in 1977 after the FEC discovered that some of his fund-raisers had used fraudulent methods to qualify for the matching funds. Another unlucky candidate, a cab driver in upstate New York, tried to qualify in 1976 but concocted his list of donors from telephone books or street directories and made the mistake of attributing exactly $250 to each "donor." The FEC caught this one early and referred it to the Justice Department for prosecution; the would-be President found himself in federal prison instead of the White House. Critics of public funding think it ironic that a law that was supposed to end corruption has instead tempted the weak to a new kind of corruption.

Ten presidential candidates (four Democrats and six Republicans) qualified for matching funds early in 1980, but by mid-April five of them had lost their eligibility through poor showings in the primaries. It is hard to say precisely how much tax money will be used for matching funds this year, since the final figure will depend partly on the success of candidates' private fund-raising and partly on FEC audits. But a guesstimate of $27 million seems reasonable.

Eugene J. McCarthy, testifying against public funding before a House committee in 1977, asked the members to imagine a scene in which King George III said to the American colonists, "Why don't you raise a few thousand pounds? We will provide matching funds, and you can run a pure revolution with matching funds from the Crown. We will have a few things to say about how you run the revolution and where it goes. . . ." McCarthy said that it was "fundamental to the whole idea of the American Revolution, of the American government, that you would not have the government finance the political process by which the government itself is to be chosen. That, in my mind, contradicts the whole conception of free and open politics, which is really what the American Revolution was about."

The general-election subsidy of nearly $30 million for each major-party nominee is not available to the standard-bearers of the minority parties. The law provides smaller subsidies for "minor" parties, but it defines a minor party as one whose candidate for President in the last election received at least 5 percent of the popular vote. This means, quite simply, that there *are* no minor parties. It is like an *Alice in Wonderland* scene:

> "Have some wine," the March Hare said in an encouraging tone.
>
> Alice looked all round the table, but there was nothing on it but tea. "I don't see any wine," she remarked.
>
> "There isn't any," said the March Hare.

While they are denied public funding, minority-party and independent candidates are still required to abide by the contribution limit of $1000 per candidate per campaign. It is a double whammy, brilliantly designed to keep the minor parties minor. So severe is the discrimination against them that one suspects many minor-party activists keep going mainly on anger.

Public funding has forced presidential campaigns to centralize their fund-raising and bookkeeping. Many of them insist that local committees send to national headquarters everything they raise so that it can be accounted for to the FEC's satisfaction. Then national sends money back to local.

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In other words, local volunteers have lost control of their own money. Presidential politics is becoming so centralized, professionalized, and bureaucratized that soon there may be little difference between a campaign headquarters and the head office of General Motors or Exxon. Or, come to think of it, between a campaign headquarters and the office of the Federal Election Commission.

Public funding of the Democratic and Republican national conventions, unlike the other kinds of subsidies, is not a child of the 1970s. Only federal funding is new. Municipal funding of major-party conventions goes back many decades and is still a significant factor in convention finances. Cities subsidize other kinds of large conventions too, either directly or indirectly; they say that this makes sense because a large convention brings much business and some tax revenue to a city. This is true, of course, although one wonders whether this year's Democratic convention will be valuable enough to New York City taxpayers to justify the roughly $8.5 to $9.5 million the city plans to spend on it. The largest sums of city money will go for renting Madison Square Garden for the Democrats, making large alterations in the Garden to fit the needs of the convention, and paying overtime to the city police who will provide security.

The last item alone may run as high as $3.5 million. A city official, asked why security costs are so high in view of the peaceful nature of recent conventions, said that police salaries have risen and that, because the Democrats have an incumbent President, special security measures are needed for him and also for the cabinet members and diplomats expected to attend the convention. He said that the city has to supplement Secret Service protection with huge numbers of police whenever Carter is in town. He also noted that the city expects more demonstrators ("no-nukes," for example) than it had for the 1976 convention, when Carter was not an incumbent.

In 1972 and 1976, the feds picked up the convention security-assistance burden when the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration made grants to the host cities. The LEAA convention grants totaled $5 million in 1976. This year LEAA wants to up the ante to $7 million. If the proposed grants are approved, this money will be in addition to the federal subsidies paid directly to the major parties for their conventions.

Municipal funding was not the only source of convention financing in the old days. Both parties also relied heavily on corporate advertising in their convention program books. That was allowed despite the legal prohibition of corporate spending "in connection with" any election or nominating convention; in fact, the IRS even allowed corporations to take business deductions for the ads. But the practice got out of hand in 1964 when the Democrats became greedy and started charging $15,000 per page of advertising in their program book. Then the Republicans followed suit with a between-conventions book in 1965; the Democrats did the same, and the whole system became a minor scandal. A discreet flirtation would have been all right, but here were both major parties in bed with some of the largest corporations around, including many government contractors. Congress decided that the sinners had gone too far and repealed tax deductions for advertising in political programs; then—when it became clear that the two parties needed corporate advertising for their 1968 conventions—decided to allow the deductions again. This continued through the 1972 conventions but after Watergate Congress decided that it was time for the sinners to reform again. So it took away the tax deductions, but made up for the loss by providing the convention subsidies. The parties were rescued from temptation and were paid to be virtuous.

The basic federal subsidy of $4.4 million for each convention goes for things like platform hearings around the country, printing, telephone bills, communications, travel, and—usually the largest item—salaries and professional fees for the people who put the whole show together. And "show" does seem to be an appropriate word, at least for the Republicans. By the end of 1979, the GOP convention committee had already paid a $10,000 professional fee for "program script for convention." And the Democrats had already paid $13,000 to a professional security consultant who will oversee security both inside and outside Madison Square Garden. Whatever else one may say about it, this year's Democratic convention should be the safest ever held.

To be fair, it should be noted that both major parties actually returned some of their convention money to the U.S. Treasury after the 1976 conventions. The Democrats returned $170,000; the Republicans asked for less than they were entitled to and still paid back $382,000. This year, with the larger grants, the Democrats are hoping to return as much as $1.2 million. A GOP official says that the Republicans also plan to return some money to the Treasury. But he says that it is too early to estimate how much, since there is more inflation "every time you turn around." In any case, an observer is caught between wanting to commend the party finance people for trying to return anything at all—so few subsidizees do—and wondering why the subsidy was so much larger in 1980.

In providing convention subsidies, the law again makes careful provisions for its nonexistent minor parties. Meanwhile, the real minor parties get by with a little help from their friends. The Socialist Workers party held its nominating convention at Oberlin College in Ohio last summer. Delegates paid their own way and lived in the college dorms during the meetings. The SWP rented meeting rooms from the college. To pay for that and for general overhead, convention participants chipped in about $15 apiece. The new Citizens party, holding its first convention in Cleveland this spring, financed about

JOHNNY-COME-LATELY

One of the major procedural issues in the presidential campaign of 1976 was a challenge to the federal election laws and to the two-party control of American politics that the amendments enacted in 1974 sought and secured. John Anderson was one of the principal authors and sponsors of those amendments and appeared in support of the legislation when it was challenged before the Supreme Court. Even after the 1976 elections, which demonstrated that the law clearly discriminated against independent and third-party candidates, Anderson continued to defend it. As a participant in a panel sponsored by the American Enterprise Institute after the 1976 election, he went so far as to accuse critics of the law of "denigrating" the two-party system. He further declared that he was "not going to sit quietly" and listen to criticism of such a system, which "has served our country well over the last 200 years."

The fact that Anderson was a strong supporter of the two-party system as late as the end of 1976—when he also declared that he was a "card-carrying Republi-

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half the cost with a $25 registration fee for delegates and observers, and about half with money from the party's treasury. Steve Biddle, party fund-raising coordinator, estimates total convention costs at $35,000. The Libertarian party financed its $250,000 nominating convention last fall primarily through registration fees and banquet ticket sales. The party also put about $35,000 from its treasury into convention costs, but raised roughly $92,000 for its presidential ticket at a convention banquet—thus coming out $57,000 ahead.

All of this leads to several interesting questions: If the minority parties are so frugal in running their conventions, what would happen if we put them in charge of the government budget? Why do the major parties and their host cities spend millions of dollars for events that last only four or five days? Why are the major parties spending more and more money for less and less action? (Nomination fights seldom go beyond the first ballot anymore, and platform squabbles are carefully avoided.) Is the convention subsidy nothing more than an advertising subsidy? Why should the taxpayers foot the bill?

By Eugene J. McCarthy

can all his adult life" and suggested that he would continue in that course—should give added strength, because of the freshness of his conversion, to his independent campaign for President in 1980.

He has reversed himself on several other matters as well. He has declared that he was wrong in voting for the Tonkin Gulf resolution and in supporting the Vietnam War. He has announced that he had erred in his judgment in introducing and supporting a constitutional amendment declaring that the United States is a Christian nation: Its conditions, except in unusual circumstances, would have made Christians alone eligible for holding major public office. He could add a third admission of error to these—his support of the two-party system. And possibly, in the spirit of forgiveness, he could extend to the other candidates for President, presumably Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan, the right to repudiate three mistakes in their own political pasts and to urge that those mistakes be forgotten and excluded from consideration by the electorate in the 1980 presidential election.

THE POLITICAL POSTAL SUBSIDY SLIPPED through Congress so quietly in 1978 that few people noticed, sailing through as a rider on an obscure bill. There was no debate about it in either House or Senate, although one conservative Republican (then Senator Robert Griffin of Michigan) placed a dissent in the *Congressional Record*. The successful amendment simply provided that the nonprofit bulk rate of 2.7 cents per letter (later raised to 3.5 cents per letter), previously withheld from political groups, would now be available to "a national or state committee of a political party, the Republican and Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committees, the Democratic National Congressional Committee, and the National Republican Congressional Committee." (Not very subtle, were they?) The Congressional Budget Office estimated that Congress would have to appropriate $2.4 million in fiscal 1979 to make up for the revenue lost to the Postal Service through the low rate. That estimate proved to be way off the mark. The political subsidy cost over $18 million the first year, and the Postal Service estimated it would cost $24.7 million in fiscal 1980.

When the actual cost became known, a few members of Congress hinted that minority parties were responsible for much of the cost overrun. It is true that a number of the small parties took advantage of the lower rate; it was, after all, the only break they could get from a government that systematically discriminated against them. But a November 1979 Postal Service list of nonprofit permits held by party committees showed that 80 percent were held by Democratic and Republican groups. No one knows what portion of the mail volume they accounted for; it may have been 95 percent or more.

Last summer a few fiscal conservatives in the House led an effort to abolish the political subsidy. By amendment, their effort was transformed into one of reducing the subsidy: keeping it for the major parties and taking it away from the minors. The latter was accomplished by the tried-and-true method of defining minor parties out of existence. To their credit, three House Democrats (Dan Glickman of Kansas, Berkley Bedell of Iowa, Bob Eckhardt of Texas) and two Republicans (Ron Paul of Texas and Bill Thomas of California) resisted the effort to single out the minor parties for exclusion.

Representative Paul, who wanted to abolish the subsidy altogether, said that he had heard in the debate "the best arguments for taking out of the hands of the Federal Government the mail delivery monopoly. Because of this monopoly and because it is controlled by political people here in the Congress, it is used as a subsidy that can be arbitrarily passed out to the different groups." He added: "This is a political football. This is subsidy run rampant." The advocates of fair play lost, of course. The successful amendment reduced the subsidy from $24 million to $4 million, but there may be an effort to slip through a supplemental appropriation when the $4 million runs out. Meanwhile, several minority parties have gone to federal court to challenge this exclusion from the nonprofit rate; in June their claim was upheld.

If the challenge to the postal subsidy is sustained, there will be a good precedent for legal challenges to the other subsidies. There are also other ways to work for change: lobbying, educational campaigns, guerrilla tactics to publicize the rascality of the major parties. (Imagine huge banners, planted right in front of TV cameras at rallies for Democratic and Republican presidential candidates, reading THIS CAMPAIGN BROUGHT TO YOU COURTESY OF YOUR TAX DOLLARS.)

Political outsiders and outcasts will have to fight on all fronts to be successful. It is important, however, that they make a clear choice about goals. They could, for example, follow the lead of Festus Garvey, the character in Edwin O'Connor's *The Last Hurrah* who complained bitterly of his old political enemy: "What the hell are we doin' about it while he sticks his big mush in the public trough and says, 'Stand back, nobody gets any o' this but me!' And by God they don't. . . . My lovely mother, God have mercy on her soul, sized him up the first time she laid eyes on him. 'Festus, me son,' she said, 'the man's a greedy bastard!' And oh, wasn't she right though?" But Festus was more concerned with getting his own nose in the trough than getting his opponent's out. If minority parties and independent candidates take the same approach to public subsidies, they may eventually be successful in getting "their share." But the price of victory—acceptance of government surveillance and controls in politics—will be a great blow to political liberty. ❏

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The Two Faces of RONALD REAGAN

The hero of Knute Rockne All-American *has a new, moderate image. But though he may be soft on government spending, his foreign policy is still "Nuke one for the Gipper."*

By Murray N. Rothbard

A CURIOUS THING IS HAPpening in this extraordinary election year. The liberals are beginning to adjust to Ronald Reagan. After all, they claim, he's getting more moderate, he'll have to shift to the center to win the election, and he *was* a moderate and "flexible" governor of California for eight years. Maybe he won't be that bad, certainly not as erratic as Carter.

Whatever happened to the liberal fighting spirit, so evident when Barry Goldwater, Reagan's spiritual ancestor in the presidential race, was bitterly savaged in 1964? Part of the difference is subliminal, a matter of personality and image. Goldwater's persona was jut-jawed, tough, Wild West, threatening to liberal intellectuals. Reagan, on the other hand, is soothing, calm, slow, almost Quaaluded. Surely this bland, aged, amiable guy—this "nice dope," as Garry Wills referred to him—can't be a threat to anyone.

But the liberals are making a bad, even catastrophic, mistake. They are captive to the knee-jerk liberal version of political soap opera in which the Good Guys are pleasant, amiable, caring sorts like Dustin Hoffman, and the reactionary Bad Guys scowl and never feel deeply, a la Clint Eastwood. Unfortunately, it doesn't always work that way.

Liberals are being soft-soaped into accepting or at least tolerating Reagan, but opponents of big government see him in a different light. While liberals are convincing themselves that Reagan is flexible and moderate, the growing number of people fed up with government are persuaded that he remains one of them. After all, he talks like them. For years, Reagan has taken to the airwaves and the podium with his anti–big government, profreedom message. Surely, if he became President, federal regulations

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would be abolished, taxes and government expenditures would be slashed, and the government would get off our backs and out of our pocketbooks. Right? Wrong again. For, oddly and paradoxically, each set of blind men has hold of a different part of the elephant. Both the liberals and the right-wing populists are right about Reagan, yet both are making a tragic, even disastrous, mistake. For Reagan is both flexible and fanatical—but on different issues. Tragically, Reagan is flexible and moderate when it comes to freedom and big government, but hard-nosed and fanatical when it comes to global conflict.

Ronald Reagan can be understood only in the context of the modern conservative movement, in which he has flourished for three decades. Reagan is a typical conservative, with all the strengths and weaknesses, all the crotchets and prejudices, of that distinctive breed. The key to understanding him may lie in understanding his political background. Reagan was converted to conservatism in the early 1950s, when he made speeches on free enterprise for General Electric. He rose to conservative political leadership after delivering his polished "The Speech" on behalf of an otherwise disastrous Goldwater campaign in 1964. He has been the perennial conservative candidate for President ever since he became governor of California in 1966. And during the last decade he has been the preeminent political spokesman of the movement.

What animates conservatives? The movement's intellectuals have always been very high on monarchy; many conservative intellectual soirees have been devoted to discussing the relative merits of the Bourbons, the Stuarts, and the Hapsburgs. But for mainstream American conservatives like Reagan, the upper crust's devotion to monarchy has never taken hold. The Constitution and the Founding Fathers are good enough for their basic political theory.

Conservative politicians may be prepared to accept the intellectuals' fierce devotion to theocracy and compulsory morality, but in a moderate, watered-down form. The government, they contend, must be used as an instrument of moral enforcement, which in practice means cracking down on illicit sex, upholding the family, and bringing back prayer to the public schools. Pornography and prostitution are to be outlawed, gays forced back into the closet, and, in general, we are to return to the concept of this country as a Christian America, suitably scrubbed, of course, to make room for Judeo-Christians.

To many liberals, the most fearsome aspect of conservatism is its alleged dedication to a free market economy and to reducing government to a bare minimum. But the conservative devotion to a free economy is little more than a rhetorical bow to tradition. Modern American conservatism was, after all, born as a reaction against the New Deal's leap into statism; its original slant was indeed in favor of the free market and hostile to government interference in the economy. And in recent years, conservatives have tried to tap into the rising populist hostility to heavy taxation and big government.

But their hearts are not in it. Has anyone ever seen a conservative rally jump to its feet to honor the free market? Certainly not. Prayers in the schools and bans on abortion are far more likely to rouse the beast. For three decades, however, there has been one set of issues, one focus, that has been closest to the conservative heart: conflict with the Soviet Union, war against "godless Communism," the pitting of America's military might against that satanic worldwide conspiracy headquartered in Moscow. Make no mistake; if we bring a mainline conservative to the Oval Office, we are, whether we know it or not, courting a nuclear holocaust. It will probably mean repeated hard-line confrontations, at every conceivable point, with the Soviet Union. In this global game, we will be caught in the grisly Catch-22 of conservative strategic thought. For if we issue an ultimatum and the Russians back down, it will simply prove that the only way to deal with them is to push continually and be prepared to fight at every turn. And if we lose just once at this game of chicken and a nuclear war results, it will only mean the Russians were every bit as monstrous and inhuman as we thought and thus it was bound to happen anyway.

Make no mistake. If we bring a mainline conservative into the Oval Office, we are courting a nuclear holocaust.

Inevitably joined to a foreign policy of global crusading—once summed up in the memorable slogan, "Kill a Commie for Christ"—is the imposition of a garrison society at home. To the conservative, "freedom," useful though it may be as a counterpoise to Bolshevik slavery, is a highly restricted concept. Aside from the commandments of Christian morality, freedom must give way to the aggressive requirements of the national security state. Communists and other suspected subversives must be watched, spied upon, and rounded up with no civil libertarian niceties allowed to cripple the Lord's work. And even the "free" economy will be bent to the sway of this rampant militarism.

Bright souls have long divined an inner contradiction that lies at the heart of the conservative movement. How can we reconcile the plea for individual liberty, the free market, and the minimizing of government with the call for global confrontation and increased power to the FBI and the Pentagon? How can an economy be free of government control when an ever greater share is to be deflected to military use? How can a free market be reconciled with an aggrandized military-industrial complex?

Conservatives, understandably enough, never talk about this contradiction; it's embarrassing. But there is a way in which the contradiction can be reconciled, just as conservatives can be moderate and fanatical at the same time: It is a question of priorities. For most conservatives, the free market and individual liberty are primarily rhetoric. Conservatives tend to be flexible and moderate on liberty and the free market because they don't care much about them. But there are other subjects about which they care deeply: the criminalization of sin, the restoration of a Christian America, and above all the destruction of international communism. Here they will not falter, regardless of how soothing or laid-back the individual conservative may be. Freedom, private property, minimal government—all that can go, so long as they get a chance to rattle their missiles.

RONALD REAGAN'S THIRST for confrontation is easy to document. His "solution" to the Afghanistan "crisis"—for the United States a crisis only because Jimmy Carter needed one—was the monumental and loony irrelevancy of throwing a tight blockade around . . . Cuba. As would-be President Reagan put it: "The Soviet Union owns Cuba, lock, stock, and barrel. We block-

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ade it, now it's a grave logistical problem for them. . . . We blockade Cuba, which could not afford that blockade, and we say to them: 'Get your troops out of Afghanistan and we give up the blockade.'" A generous offer indeed. But Reagan is probably in favor of blockading Cuba anyway, in view of the alleged threat posed by the phantom brigade of Soviet troops stationed there.

One of the few beneficial fallouts of the Vietnam War was the Ford administration's hesitancy about getting overtly involved in the Angolan civil war. Reagan had no such qualms. In January 1976, he was urging the United States to "eyeball" the Russians over Angola and to tell them: "Out—we'll let them fight it out themselves, or you're going to have us to deal with." This May, Reagan was still at it, calling for military aid to the Savimbi guerrillas in Angola. As Reagan put it, with unconscious irony, "Savimbi . . . [has] never asked for any kind of help, except weapons, and I don't see . . . why we shouldn't provide them. . . ." Savimbi was gracious enough not to demand American troops, so, luckily, we are spared Reagan's thinking on that subject.

Mindful of American political realities, every presidential candidate of either party has been a staunch supporter of Israel. But Reagan, as a conservative leader, is devoted to Israel with particular fervor. To Reagan, Israel is not simply a political piety but part of the global struggle against the red menace. As he put it, Israel "serves as a vital strategic asset with its highly trained and experienced military forces, and is a deterrent to Soviet expansion in that troubled part of the world." Former Nixon special aide William Safire exulted at Reagan's commitment to "an undivided Jerusalem"—meaning simply and squarely, in Reagan's words, that "the sovereignty is Israel's" over the entire city. As for the PLO, to Reagan it is simply a "terrorist group" with which no negotiations are possible.

But not all terrorists are the same. "Our" terrorists and dictators are fine, so long as they are willing to take part in the global crusade. Taiwan and South Korea are valued allies. Predictably, the shah of Iran is a great guy; after all, he was a staunch ally of the United States for thirty years, wasn't he? As for the shah's dictatorial regime, Reagan is willing to sound like a permissive cultural relativist: "There are different parts of the world with different customs than ours." Margaret Mead couldn't have said it better. But the permissive Reagan fades away quickly when the enemy moves into view. His solution to the Vietnam question? "We could invade the place [North Vietnam], pave it over, and be home for lunch."

Arms to Afghan rebels, air force bases in the Sinai, a naval base off Saudi Arabia—bases, bases, everywhere are on the Reagan agenda. Military spending would increase dramatically: The B-1 bomber, the neutron bomb, the Trident submarine, the MX missile, all would be built and more. The *New York Times*' characterization of Reagan's proposed increase in military spending as "vast" scarcely exaggerates. As Reagan himself put it in March: "I think it's wrong to say we're safe because we're spending 5 percent more or 3 percent more or anything. No, go by the weapons. Now, I have outlined a number of weapon shortages that we have, but I don't have access to the high command. Just ask these men who would have to fight the war what are the essential weapons." Sure. Just ask the Pentagon.

Bases, bases, everywhere are on Reagan's agenda. The B-1 bomber, Trident submarine, neutron bomb—all would be built and more.

Reagan is deeply concerned about not being too lily-livered to shrink from nuclear confrontation with the Soviets. In fact, he strongly implies that we should seek a confrontation in order to liberate the masses behind the Iron Curtain. As Reagan put it in his famous 1964 speech, "We are being asked to buy our safety from the threat of the atomic bomb by selling into permanent slavery our fellow human beings enslaved behind the Iron Curtain, to tell them to give up their hope for freedom because we are ready to make a deal with their slavemasters." How the slaves of communism would be aided by nuclear incineration is difficult to say, unless, of course, we have made the decision that they are better off dead than red.

For Reagan, recent administrations have been crippled by persistent "appeasement" of the Soviets. Kissinger was the architect of détente. Carter's policy "borders on appeasement." Carter was too "weak" on Iran and Afghanistan. Carter's line-drawing in the sands of the Persian Gulf was not nearly sufficient; the President, opined Reagan, "is encouraging the belief that this nation will not risk war no matter what the provocation." Furthermore, Carter should deliver specific ultimatums stating what we will do if Russia does not withdraw from Afghanistan. As in virtually every other matter, the United States should be sending "strong signals" to Russia. On Saudi Arabia, for example, Reagan seems to be threatening war with Russia not only if Russia should ever invade that country, but even if the Saudi government we love so much is toppled by a domestic uprising.

As Reagan puts it, we must "let it be known that we are not going to let the Saudi Arabian government fall, either from trouble from within or from pressure from without." One shudders at the new Vietnams that will be in store under President Reagan. On the Iranian hostage question, Reagan, like all the other candidates, is vague, except that he would support putting "extreme pressure" on Iran, perhaps an all-out blockade. But on one point the laid-back, compassionate Reagan is specific: The U.S. hostages in Iran should not have visits from their families. That would be "almost as if we were recognizing the right of the Iranians to hold them."

In sum, what are we to think of a man who sincerely attacks the Carter-Brzezinski administration for generating "the same kind of atmosphere as when Neville Chamberlain went tapping his cane on the cobblestones of Munich"? To Reagan, the baleful influence of Brzezinski and the other Trilateral Commission members in the Carter administration has meant "a softening of defense," a belief "that trade and business should transcend, perhaps, the national defense."

ON QUESTIONS OF DOMESTIC policy—the free market and big government—Reagan is a very different person. Here his flexibility, moderation, and pragmatism come to the fore. In the first place, Reagan's record as governor of California—where he had absolutely no access to the nuclear button—was all too moderate. Despite his bravado about having stopped the growth of state government, the actual story is that the California budget grew by 122 percent during his eight years as governor, not much of an improvement on the growth rate of 130 percent during the preceding

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two terms of free-spending liberal Pat Brown. The state bureaucracy increased during Reagan's administration from 158,000 to 192,000, a rise of nearly 22 percent—hardly squaring with Reagan's boast of having "stopped the bureaucracy cold."

Neither is Reagan's record on taxes any comfort. He started off with a bang by *in*creasing state taxes nearly $1 billion in his first year in office—the biggest tax increase in California history. Income, sales, corporate, bank, liquor, and cigarette taxes were all boosted dramatically. Two more tax hikes—in 1971 and 1972—raised revenues by another $500 million and $700 million respectively.

By the end of Reagan's eight years, state income taxes had nearly tripled, from a bite of $7.68 per $1000 of personal income to $19.48. During his administration, California rose in a ranking of the states from twentieth to thirteenth in personal income tax collection per capita, and it rose from fourth to first in per capita revenue from corporate income taxes. As John Vickerman, chief deputy in the legislative analyst's office in Sacramento, concluded: "Obviously, the tax bite went up under the Reagan regime. It was a significant increase even when you start considering inflationary dollars.... The rate of growth was about the same as his predecessor." Reagan is now trying to take some credit for Proposition 13 and the popular tax-cutting movements in California. But during his own administration things were quite different; Reagan bitterly fought against similar initiatives in 1968 and 1972.

Moreover, Reagan likes to talk the conservative line that federal programs should, in large part, be turned over to the states, and state programs to the localities, so that government can be closer to the people. But what did he actually do as governor? A large part of his tax increases went to pay for local programs controlled by the state; Reagan accelerated the trend of collecting tax money on the state level to spend on state-controlled local programs. He created seventy-three new state government councils and commissions, with a total budget, in his last year alone, of $12 million. Included was the California Energy Commission, which put the state hip-deep into the energy business: A three-year review process is now required before any new power plant can be constructed in California.

Ronald Reagan is proudest of the welfare reforms he enacted in 1971, which removed more than 510,000 from the welfare rolls by—among other things—forcing adults to support their welfare parents. He then turned around and boosted the amount of welfare paid to those remaining by 43 percent, so that total welfare costs to the taxpayer didn't decline at all.

So much for Reagan as governor. How about as President—is he about to usher in a laissez-faire paradise? As Reagan's fellow conservative actor, Duke Wayne, used to say: not hardly. In March Reagan came out in support of the Food and Drug Administration, provided it confine its regulation to the "purity" rather than the effectiveness of a product. As for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, a meddling outfit hated more intensely by small businessmen across the country than any other, he would expand it. Not only does Reagan favor continuing OSHA's picayune "safety inspections," but he would go further and "use OSHA as a government laboratory to see if we cannot find an answer to those problems and consult with industry to eliminate them." OSHA's pernicious compulsory powers, according to Reagan, should continue.

During Reagan's years as governor, California's bureaucracy grew almost 22 percent and state income taxes nearly tripled.

On trucking deregulation, which even Ted Kennedy favors, Reagan has also backed off. All he will commit himself to is the establishment of an outside "task force" to "sit down with the regulations and work out between them what they thought was a fair elimination of some and keeping of others." In short, on trucking, Kennedy is more pro–free market than Reagan is. When a bewildered reporter asked how Reagan could square this view with free market principles, the candidate took refuge in real or pretended ignorance: "Well, I just have to tell you that I have been counseled by people with contrary views regarding this particular field. I could not make a decision on the information that we've got as to whether one side or the other is right." This macho gunslinger who thinks nothing of risking a nuclear shootout with the Kremlin over a blockade of Cuba is weak and squishy soft on deregulation of trucking.

IN THE MACROECONOMIC arena, for some months a well-publicized battle has been raging for the soul of Ronald Reagan. Two groups are in bitter conflict, with Reagan trying to pick his way through the minefield. In one camp are what we may call "the Responsibles," all the economists prominent in the Nixon and Ford administrations. They comprise a coalition of monetarists, headed by Milton Friedman and including Martin Anderson, and conservative Keynesians, including George Shultz, Arthur Burns, Alan Greenspan, Charls E. Walker, Herbert Stein, and William Simon.

In the area of economic theory Friedmanites and Keynesians are at odds, but in the realm of practical policy they are close enough for a cozy coalition. During an inflationary period conservative Keynesians call for a balanced budget, perhaps even a surplus; a budget deficit is abhorred as propelling further inflation. To the Friedmanites, deficits per se are not inflationary, only those financed by the banking system. Since in practice any deficit is likely to be financed by the banks, both groups can unite in calling for a balanced budget to combat inflation. In that case, however, the Responsibles—with grave reluctance and appropriate sobriety—have to counsel Reagan against any large tax cut unless such a cut is matched by an equivalent slash in government spending.

But the Responsibles feel in their hearts that cutting government spending is politically unrealistic. And so, from Friedman to Simon, they have opted for a constitutional amendment, on the state and federal levels, to limit the future growth of government spending to its current proportion of the gross national (or state) product. This is in line with the constitutional amendment proposed by the establishment-conservative National Tax Limitation Committee, as well as Proposition 1, which Reagan pushed for in California and which failed to pass in 1973.

When analyzed, the position of the Responsibles, sober and responsible though it may be, holds very little charm for the critic of big government, or indeed for anyone else. When you peel away the fiery free market rhetoric of a Simon or a Friedman, the practical political offer is simply more of the same: the current status quo. To hard-working people angry at high taxes and wild

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spending, all that the Responsibles can offer is to keep government at its current pace relative to the private sector. No tax cuts, no reduced government, just fiscal rectitude. Who is going to go to the barricades for that?

It is this grave defect in the political economy of the Responsibles that has given rise to a maverick group in the Reagan economic camp, the neopopulists—or, as one of them cheerfully conceded, the "Wild Men." Guru of the neopopulists is Arthur Laffer, of the University of Southern California; the other key figure is Laffer's propagandist and point man, Jude Wanniski, formerly of the *Wall Street Journal*. Their political leader in the Reagan camp is Representative Jack Kemp of New York and their overall political philosopher is Irving Kristol, godfather of the neoconservative movement.

The Laffer group begins its analysis with the keen perception that no one is going to jump with excitement over a balanced budget and fiscal sobriety. The Republicans, they assert, should start ladling out their own goodies to the masses; why leave promises to the liberal big spenders, with conservatives offering only dour hangovers for the morning after? Specifically, the neopopulists ask themselves: What do the voters want? And the answer comes to them loud and clear: They want big tax cuts; they want to keep and even add to the current spending goodies of the welfare-warfare state; and they also want a balanced budget to end inflation. Great, say the neopopulists, we'll give them all three. And so came the one specific Reagan proposal that has fired public support: the Kemp-Roth overall income tax cut of 30 percent over a three-year period. To hell with fiscal sobriety.

But, but . . . as Mary McGrory asked the Republican candidates in the Iowa debate, how can you offer the public three contradictory things: big tax cuts, balanced budgets, and maintaining government spending and services at current levels? And then came the magic answer, the panacea—the "Laffer curve." The Laffer curve, which can be explained to any congressman on a dinner napkin, states that if tax rates are cut, productivity and investment will increase to such an extent that the supply of goods will increase and total tax revenues will actually rise. So presto, chango. The circle can be squared, and contrary to Milton Friedman, there *is* such a thing as a free lunch. Just call it the Laffer curve and "supply-side economics." Not only that: A tax cut will also cure the inflation problem, because the increased supply of goods will swamp any tendencies toward inflation.

This cheerful nose-thumbing at the economic establishment is calculated to drive all orthodox economists, including conservative Keynesians and Friedmanites, up the wall. For while tax cuts will undoubtedly raise productivity and supply, the question is, by how much? And it is downright bizarre to believe that a 30 percent cut in tax rates will at once raise tax revenues 30 percent, or that supply increases can offset galloping expansion in the money supply.

Yet the real argument is not in the realm of economic theory. Corner a Lafferite and he will cheerfully admit that Kemp-Roth may well not increase revenues by 30 percent, but who cares? Why can't conservatives have a deficit for once, and let the liberals cope with it? To the arguments that the Laffer-curve approach is deceitful demagogy and that the public will remember when the curve doesn't hold up, the neopopulists answer cheerfully: *Après nous le deluge*. In any case, the public will be so happy with the tax cut that they won't care about the Laffer curve any more. As Irving Kristol admits: "What if the traditional conservatives are right and a Kemp-Roth tax cut, without corresponding cuts in expenditures, also leaves us with a fiscal problem? The neoconservative is willing to leave those problems to be coped with by liberal interregnums. He wants to shape the future, and will leave it to his opponents to tidy up afterwards." In the long run we are all dead.

We need a President who is a hawk on opposing big government and a realistic dove on foreign affairs. Reagan's not the one.

Both groups are right, and both are wrong. The Responsibles are correct that the neopopulists are being deceitful and demagogic, indeed irresponsible in the worst sense. But the neopopulists are right that the Responsibles are offering the public simply more of what it doesn't like now. Besides, as Parkinson's Law dictates, expenditures rise to meet income, so expenditures may very well have to fall if taxes are cut first. In any case, we have nothing to lose, since the burden of taxes is no better or easier, at the least, than the burden of inflation.

*WHICH WAY WILL REA*gan jump? Since the beginning he has been in the Laffer camp and has been championing Kemp-Roth. But the ouster of John Sears as campaign manager eliminated a key Kemp ally, and Sears's successor William Casey is a close friend and ally of William Simon. We can therefore expect a steady slide toward Respectability. While sticking formally to Kemp-Roth, which after all has long been his only specific economic policy plank, Reagan has already begun to fudge on the gold standard, which Laffer had earlier persuaded him to advocate. The gold standard would help check inflation and would be a significant step toward a free market in money, but nothing is more calculated to infuriate the Friedmanites and the conservative Keynesians, who all regard gold as a barbarous relic and wish to keep total control of the money supply in the hands of the Federal Reserve System. Although he previously called for the gold standard, Reagan today says that first we have to stabilize inflation and the economy, since "gold is a kind of a wild card right now."

The knowledgeable, ultra-Responsible, and very antipopulist *Business Week* has suggested that George Shultz's April appointment as top economic coordinator for Ronald Reagan presages a Responsible transformation of Kemp-Roth. In the projected new program to be offered by Shultz and Walker, Kemp-Roth tax cuts are to be phased in over five rather than three years, and to be tied to gradual spending reductions and taken out of an expected federal surplus. And since any notion of a federal surplus is bound to be pie-in-the-sky, that should kill Kemp-Roth for good and all. So, with even the tax cut riddled by the Responsibles, we wind up with Reagan fully as flexible and as moderate on economic issues as any liberal might like.

What America needs right now is a President who is a militant hawk on freedom and big government and a realistic dove on war and foreign affairs. Calm and laid-back though he may be, Reagan offers us precisely the opposite. Such is the paradox of conservativism, and such is the paradox of Ronald Reagan in 1980.

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THE HIGH-TECH EMBARGO—

Sheep in Wolf's Clothing

Restrictions on American exports haven't forced the Soviets to remove a single soldier from Afghanistan. But the Western Europeans and the Japanese are smiling.

By JOHN MARKOFF

THE GHOST OF VLADIMIR ILICH LENIN is stalking the corridors of the Pentagon. Lenin's words to the effect that the capitalist will sell his enemies the rope for his own hanging grace the inside cover of the Bucy Report, which presents the findings of a high-level advisory task force of the Defense Science Board. The report recommends sweeping changes in U.S. policies on the export of technology to the socialist world.

One can only wonder why men like J. Fred Bucy, president of Texas Instruments; Dr. John Allen, then the director of the Department of Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency; and Dr. Sayre Stevens of the Central Intelligence Agency turned to the chief architect of proletarian revolution for counsel.

Yet the Bucy Report lies at the heart of a widening battle now being fought within the highest levels of the Carter administration and between the United States and its Western allies over the export of technology to the socialist world.

In January 1980, in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Jimmy Carter announced that the United States would no longer do "business as usual" with the Soviet Union. In one swift move Carter undid the very cornerstone of détente, embargoing grain sales and cutting off the export of high-technology equipment to the Soviet Union.

Now, six months after Carter revived full-scale economic war against Moscow, Soviet troops are still in Afghanistan, and American "punitive" measures designed to demonstrate resolve in condemning the Soviets have yet to show any results. So far the embargo has succeeded only in earning criticism from all sides in Washington. From liberals, who assume that even a full-scale embargo will have little effect in an increasingly less polarized world where the U.S. can no longer draw a *cordon sanitaire* around the Soviet bloc, to conservatives, who argue that U.S. industry must be prepared to swallow an even more bitter pill, all are condemning the administration's trade embargo. And in fact the embargo now seems likely to have results quite different from those intended, damaging American industry rather than Moscow and directly benefiting the Europeans and Japanese and even indirectly the Soviet economy.

Jimmy Carter has found himself trapped in a series of painful contradictions. By continuing to allow American technology to flow to the Soviet Union he would seem to be strengthening the Soviets; however, by cutting off this flow, Carter would forfeit to Western Europe and Japan the largest untapped market for high-technology products. As a result, in the battle between "traders" and "economic warriors" Carter has attempted to find a politically survivable middle ground. Grain is embargoed, but Washington will still allow delivery of up to eight million metric tons of wheat and corn, which it was committed to sell to the Soviet Union under the two nations' grains agreement. The initial outright suspension of high-technology exports has given way to a "restrictive" policy that cuts back on U.S. exports, mostly computer-related, but won't hurt the Soviets, who will still be able to buy what they need from Western Europe and Japan.

Ultimately, then, the Carter trade embargo is a sheep in wolf's clothing: a failure at drawing the Soviets out of Afghanistan, and instead a kind of self-imposed "non-tariff barrier" on U.S. exporters.

"It's a case of shooting from the hip and falling on our face at the same time," says Willard Mathais, research director for the American Committee on East-West Accord. And a Soviet-affairs analyst in the Commerce Department, who is committed to opposing Moscow with economic weapons rather than arms, concedes that the policy has been totally ineffective so far. This failure, he says, is compounded by the inability of administration officials to recognize their own limitations. "What worries me," he reflects, "is that this administration continues to take its policies seriously."

Carter is a Johnny-come-lately to a bitter debate that began thirty years ago when U.S. policy makers sought to economically isolate the socialist world as part of the overarching American strategy of "containing Communism." In the opening days of the Cold War, American diplomats, using Marshall Plan aid—several times more than the total amount of East-West trade—as a lever, persuaded Western Europe to join a secret group which became known as COCOM, the

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Coordinating Committee.

The organization grew in part also out of the desire of the first U.S. representative to the UN Atomic Energy Commission, Bernard Baruch, to find a means of prohibiting the Soviet Union from constructing the industrial base necessary to build an atomic bomb. In 1947 Secretary of the Navy James V. Forrestal noted in his diary that at a meeting of Baruch, Eisenhower, Robert Patterson (secretary of war), and Forrestal, "Baruch feels that we must begin to use immediately all possible economic measures in our relations with Russia." Baruch received substantial aid in coordinating the initial embargo against the Soviet Union from Averell Harriman, then secretary of commerce. It was Harriman, today one of the strongest advocates of détente, who carried out the preliminary COCOM negotiations with other governments.

In order to remain shielded from the scrutiny and control of the allies' various congresses, parliaments, and other representative bodies, COCOM has always operated on a nontreaty basis, working strictly under a gentlemen's agreement. It still meets in the same room in the U.S. embassy in Paris where it first met. By now it consists of the NATO nations minus Iceland plus Japan. It remains the principal Western forum for maintaining the strategic embargo lists that constitute the heart of the economic war against the socialist bloc.

From the outset COCOM has been dominated by the United States, with Western Europe a reluctant ally consistently trying to limit the embargo as closely as possible to military products. The nations of Western Europe have been unenthusiastic partners in part because they have longstanding cultural and trade ties with Eastern Europe and in part because they have been less strongly possessed by the anticommunist fervor that has periodically captivated the United States.

American strategists, however, particularly during the fifties and sixties, have been obsessed with the idea of economic warfare. On occasion they have attempted to include such products as plastic combs in COCOM embargo lists and have reportedly wanted to add brassieres and shirt buttons, here apparently taking a page from Soviet Premier Khrushchev's argument that the most strategic of all commodities was buttons, because without them the soldiers could only fight with one hand—the other would be holding up their pants.

American strategists have been obsessed with the idea of economic warfare; they've even tried to include plastic combs in the embargo lists.

Throughout the sixties the United States continually pressured its allies to maintain Cold War barriers around the socialist world. Even during the height of the Vietnam War the Soviets were willing to continue to sell the United States titanium, a metal used extensively in U.S. military aircraft. Nevertheless the Kennedy and Johnson administrations clung to a policy of economic warfare.

Not until the early years of the Nixon administration, when the Soviet appetite for Western grain and technology was increasing and Henry Kissinger was attempting to create a "web of economic interdependence" to elicit greater cooperation from Moscow, did economic warfare and international tensions begin to ease.

The relaxation of restrictions on the export of advanced technology to the Soviet Union became the practical basis of détente in the early seventies. Until 1969 the Export Control Act of 1949 had banned the export of commodities that would "significantly contribute to the economic potential of such nation or nations which would prove detrimental to the United States." However, the Export Administration Act of 1969 restricted the export only of items that "would make a significant contribution to the military potential" of any nation with which the United States was at odds. Though the difference in wording is clear, the definition of a "contribution to the military potential" remains ambiguous. Nevertheless the change lies at the heart of the bitter debate over trade with the Soviets that is taking place today.

KISSINGER IS CREDITED WITH THIS change in policy. He argued that "an increase in a nation's resources, i.e., economic capabilities, was not in and of itself threatening the United States." The argument never convinced the hawks, but, more important, Kissinger never succeeded in linking trade and American technology transfers to Soviet acquiescence in U.S. foreign policy initiatives. The Soviets agreed to détente but never accepted Kissinger's requirement that they follow U.S. world leadership.

By binding the Soviets economically, socially, and politically to the West, Kissinger had hoped to make Moscow line up as a junior competitor in exchange for what he perceived to be the one-way benefits of economic interchange—an increased rate of Soviet economic growth, improved industrial infrastructure, and the ability to extract marketable raw materials. In Kissinger's view this meant that the Soviets would accept a SALT structure that would give the United States real strategic military advantages, and that they would not attempt to compete with the United States within its own sphere of influence—in Kissinger's mind the entire world beyond the socialist bloc.

The Soviets rejected Kissinger's grand strategy. Viewing détente as a framework for "peaceful competition" between the superpowers, they continued their drive to reach nuclear parity while refusing to confine their international activities. Moreover, Kissinger's enemies in Congress and the Defense Department—ideologically committed to continuing economic warfare—worked to undermine trade increases.

The 1974 Jackson-Vanik Amendment, which tied Export-Import Bank financing and most-favored-nation status to the improvement of Soviet emigration policies, infuriated the Kremlin. In retaliation the Soviets refused to implement the U.S.–Soviet trade agreement and slowed their purchases of American goods. The amendment also failed to achieve its stated goal of easing restrictions on emigration from the Soviet Union. Immediately after the passage of the amendment emigration of Jews from Russia actually fell by more than one-third while U.S.–Soviet trade also dropped by more than 25 percent. The amendment did, however, achieve Senator Jackson's real purpose: It sabotaged détente.

Despite the bitter infighting, trade between the United States and the Soviet Union has increased over the past decade. Before Afghanistan, U.S. exports to the Soviet Union had grown more than 50 percent in one year: from $2.2 billion

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in 1978 to $3.6 billion in 1979. And, despite claims that the United States was undermining its military advantage through high-technology trade, most of the exports have been grains. Last year the United States sold $1.4 billion worth of corn and $800 million worth of wheat to the Soviets. While this amount constitutes only a small fraction of America's $182 billion in annual exports, the increase encouraged support for future trade expansion.

After the Carter embargo was announced, industrialists from West Germany flocked to Moscow to sign trade agreements with the Soviets.

The socialist countries have, in recent years, become a rapidly expanding market for high-technology products and know-how—one of the principal remaining U.S. export strengths. This is taking place in part because as socialist economic growth rates have slowed these countries have turned increasingly to technology to boost productivity. The tenth Soviet five-year plan clearly outlines Russia's intention to accelerate economic growth by systematically shifting to capital-intensive production methods to increase productivity. As a result, trade with the advanced industrial countries of the West is the most rapidly growing sector of the Soviet economy.

The development of socialist high-technology markets has given rise to wonderful ironies: Major U.S. multinationals have set up protrade, prodétente groups like the US–USSR Trade Council and the American Committee for East-West Accord, while at the same time retaining their charter memberships in anti-Communist defense spending organizations. There was a period during the mid-seventies when Rockwell International was trying to sell the Soviets valves for nuclear power plants while it was building the B-1 bomber for the U.S. Air Force. The company at one and the same time was a member of both the US–USSR Trade Council and the American Security Council, an extremely conservative "stop the Communist menace" group.

America's ambivalence about trading with the Soviets has not been shared by Western Europe and Japan. They have maintained significantly higher exports to the socialist countries than has the United States, and in recent years France has concluded a number of technology sales with the Soviets after American deals fell through because of government intervention.

Since Afghanistan the response of the Western allies to the Carter administration's pleas for unity resemble a Daumier cartoon depicting two heavily armed soldiers in front of a door marked "Bureau de Désarmement." Each soldier is looking at the other deferentially and one is saying in a most courteous fashion, "After you!" Similarly, West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt has stated that his country is prepared to go every bit as far as the rest of Europe in supporting the Carter embargo, undoubtedly knowing that the French do not intend to stop doing business as usual over Afghanistan simply because the Americans have. In fact, of all the allies, only Margaret Thatcher seems eager to jump onto the embargo bandwagon, and even her own foreign minister has taken some pains to soften Thatcher's zeal.

Thus in an era of intensifying economic rivalries among the major Western countries, when the United States is losing the technological lead it has held since the end of the Second World War, America seems bent on embarking on a solitary and futile blockade of the Soviet Union. The domestic politics of our major Western allies will severely restrict U.S. efforts to limit advanced technology and strategic commodity trade in the 1980s. The governments of Western Europe and Japan have a large stake in maintaining current levels of domestic employment and growth, and cannot easily cut off socialist trade without risking domestic unrest and jeopardizing internal economic growth.

Some of the strains that have developed in the Atlantic alliance are being exacerbated by the failure of the Carter administration to pressure America's allies to support the trade embargo. Western Europe and Japan have developed bilateral relationships with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe which have had increasing economic and political importance. The "Ostpolitik" of West Germany is the mainstay of the Schmidt regime, and West Germany is now the socialist world's largest Western trading partner. The West German press carried accounts of how, after the Carter embargo was announced, German industrialists flocked to Moscow in order to sign agreements with the Soviets before any similar German embargo.

Japan also now exports more than $4 billion annually to the Soviet Union, and the two nations have a series of codevelopment projects designed to supply the Japanese with essential raw materials such as timber, oil, and natural gas.

FORMER UNDERSECRETARY OF STATE George Ball tells a story about one of the unintended consequences of an earlier U.S. attempt to employ economic warfare. As Ball tells it, in the early sixties President Kennedy decided to exercise America's COCOM veto power to bloc the sale of wide-diameter natural gas pipeline by the West Germans to the Soviet Union. Kennedy was interested in blocking exports to the Soviets and in discouraging contact between Berlin and Moscow. However, in a little more than a year it became apparent that Kennedy's strategy had backfired badly. The Soviets had simply developed their own pipeline manufacturing capability. A high-level Soviet diplomat approached Ball and told him, "We're grateful to your government for keeping us from getting that German wide-diameter pipe and are no longer dependent on the West."

Along similar lines, Willard Mathais of the American Committee on East-West Accord outlines how the current Carter embargo is actually strengthening the Soviet economy. By limiting American grain sales, he argues, Carter has weakened the U.S. balance of payments and the dollar, thereby indirectly strengthening the price of gold, a major Soviet export, and making it easier for the Soviets to finance imports.

Another example of a misguided U.S. policy likely to have an effect opposite of that intended is the strict limitation, under the March embargo guidelines issued by the Commerce Department, placed on the export of industrial technology for oil and gas production and exploration equipment. In 1977 an intelligence study was released which indicated that Soviet oil production was going to peak in the early eighties

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and then begin to decline. Since the invasion of Afghanistan, a number of policy makers and analysts, from Brzezinski on down, have argued that long-term Soviet aims include control of the Mideast oil fields. Why then, it can be asked, is the Carter administration going so far out of its way to back the USSR into a corner on increasing domestic energy production? Since the world energy crisis has made the Middle East a potential flash point for a new world war, the Carter policy on embargoing oil technology seems horribly misguided and could conceivably lead to the kind of intervention that the embargo is supposed to end.

Every country has myths central to its national security. In the United States, at least until recently, the central myth has been "technological superiority." Technology, it is commonly argued, acts as an American "force multiplier," and has been seen as the secret weapon that will ultimately defend America from the heathen at the gates.

The Iranian rescue debacle, however, has painfully shown that even the clearest technological edge can cut both ways. During the mid-seventies, as socialist markets developed for American technology, bitter bureaucratic infighting developed in the Nixon and Ford administrations between, on the one hand, the Commerce and State departments, charged with promoting American industrial exports, and, on the other, the Pentagon, the self-appointed protector of American technology.

Even within the military-industrial complex, however, the Pentagon's "no trade" position is not without its detractors. Indeed, some of the corporations at the very heart of the defense establishment find themselves having to forgo lucrative trade opportunities in the name of national defense.

The Bucy Report can best be understood as a product of negotiations between the high-technology corporations, anxious to develop new markets in the socialist world, and the hard-line cold warriors in Defense who were still interested in pursuing Machiavelli's dictum—carrying on war by other means. The concept of "critical technologies" highlights the attempted compromise of the Bucy committee.

Its report issued in early 1976 directed the Defense Department to come up with a list of technologies that would be classified as "critical" and prohibited from export, leaving U.S. corporations free to export less advanced equipment. The plan called for creating a classification system that would circumvent the current bureaucratic licensing maze, which has led to long delays and, in many cases, denial of permission to export equipment often freely available to the socialist bloc from Western Europe or Japan.

High-tech trade with the socialist world remains mired in a bureaucratic maze of interagency committees and subject to presidential whim.

However, even during the three and a half years before the invasion of Afghanistan the Bucy plan was frustrated at every step by the Pentagon. In late 1979 Undersecretary of Defense William Perry announced that it would be almost another year before the nine Critical Technology Export Groups appointed by industry and the thirteen Technology Task Groups of federal agency specialists produced "significant results."

BUCY HIMSELF HAD WAITED UNTIL THE beginning of 1979 to criticize the Pentagon for its lack of progress in implementing his 1976 report, which industry had widely agreed was the needed compromise that would permit exports while protecting U.S. technology. At a meeting of the Armed Forces Communications Association in Washington, D. C., Bucy charged that the Defense Department had failed to come up with a "coherent policy on export controls," and implied that the DOD was attempting to sabotage the intent of the committee's report: "DOD has given minimal support to the administration of export controls," he stated. "Other parts of the government have serious doubts about DOD's committment to any new policy."

Now, more than a year after the Texas Instruments executive broke with the process that his report had initiated, there is still no further definition from the Pentagon-led committees trying to implement the critical-technology approach. In the meantime American technology trade with the socialist world has remained mired in a bureaucratic maze of almost a dozen interagency committees and subject to presidential whim.

Yet, in the final analysis, the intent of the Bucy Report would have been impossible to carry out. A General Accounting Office report, issued shortly before the Bucy Report, dismissed the work of the DOD taskforce in a single sentence: "Regulations on the transfer of technology are unenforceable."

Despite licensing limitations and the Carter embargo, U.S. technology is now being transferred through numerous channels, including illegal smuggling through phony foreign trade firms, graduate students from socialist countries who study at American universities, the free exchange of technology through literature and scientific and technical exchanges, outright theft, and the reexport of technology by third parties in foreign countries, including COCOM allies that have a different interpretation of which products and technologies should be embargoed.

The ultimate lesson on the reexport problem and the technology transfer embargo attempts is that those interested in carrying on an economic war of attrition against the Soviet Union have probably succeeded only in injuring U.S. high-technology industries and indirectly hurting the very "national security" interests they are so committed to protecting.

Has American industry sold the Soviets a technological hanging rope then? It's unlikely. What is clear is that American industry has paid a terrible price as a result of the postwar policy of economic warfare. The strategy of locking up U.S. technology has helped bring the nation to the point where it has lost or is losing its technological lead in many key industries. Although America has managed to hold its lead in highly classified military technology, its competitiveness in many commercial technologies is rapidly slipping away. Technology is a two-edged sword.

One wonders why the authors of the Bucy Report chose to cite Lenin rather than one of their own, Thomas Edison, who once exhorted an audience, "if they [the communists] talk from soapboxes, let the businessman go into the soapbox business."

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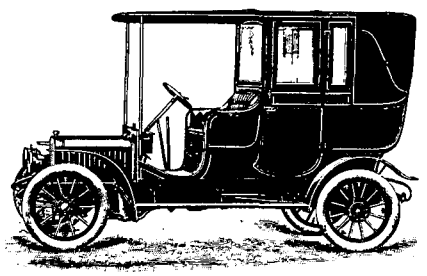
HISTORY OF THE IDEA OF PROGRESS, by Robert Nisbet. Basic Books, 370 pp., $16.95.

The Greeks had a word for it

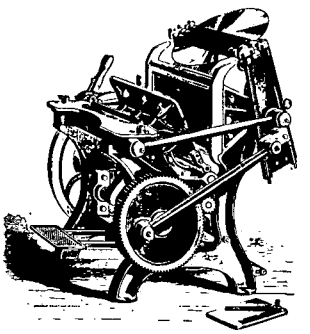
MAURICE CRANSTON

ONE OF THE REASONS FOR the particular distinction of Professor Robert Nisbet among American sociologists is that he has always taken an interest in the past; he has never been satisfied to seek explanations of social reality solely in detailed study of present facts. His way of making our own world more intelligible is to examine its relationship with earlier worlds. In this he is closer to Alexis de Tocqueville than to his more "empiricist" colleagues. The latter may well conclude from the title of his latest book that Robert Nisbet, having retired from the Albert Schweitzer chair at Columbia to become a fellow of the American Enterprise Institute in Washington, has finally turned from social science to history. But the truth is otherwise. What is offered in this new book is not just a



history of the idea of progress, but an argument, a theory of progress, which Nisbet sees as one of the central and defining concepts of occidental culture.

Nisbet sets out to refute the widely held opinion that progress is a modern notion, not much older than the seventeenth century. He traces the idea back to classical antiquity and suggests that it has an unbroken descent from Greek thought. The purpose of his argument is not, however, simply to correct a textbook error in the matter of dating. He wants to vindicate progress, to prove its senior status, to retrieve it from the damp hands of ideologues who diminish it by embracing it—and finally, to defend progress against fashionable neo-Rousseauesque hostility. This multiple enterprise Nisbet undertakes with sharp wits and sweet manners, with scholarship lightly worn, and with that firm grip on words which makes all his work a pleasure to read.

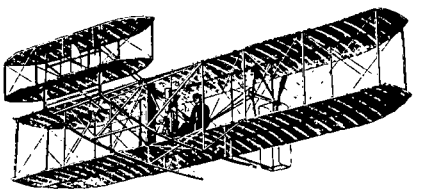


His first chapters ascribe a concept of progress to classical antiquity. These are perhaps the most controversial, since we have all been taught that the Greeks believed that human fortunes rise and fall like the seasons, with periods of advancement followed by periods of decline—or alternatively, that nothing ever changes. Nisbet produces a number of passages from leading Greek authors who not only employ the word *progredientes*, close to our word *progress*, but who spell out the idea of the human condition getting better, by stages, with the development of knowledge. Even in Aeschylus, a somber poet, Nisbet detects the "conviction that in major respects the life of man is better today than at any point in the past."

Some readers may suspect that despite such confidence in the superiority of present culture over past barbarism, the Greek mind characteristically expected all good things ultimately to decay. I myself do not think, and Nisbet does not persuade me, that Aeschylus or any other Greek author expected continuous progress in the future. In that respect, Nisbet is more compelling when he turns to early Christian thought.

That the early fathers of the church had their minds directed to the future, we all agree; no one doubts that their faith, so central a part of their religion, was a faith in a better life to come. Where Nisbet differs from conventional wisdom is in his claim that the early Christian vision of a better life was not concerned exclusively with the world beyond the grave, but was in large part also a vision of a better life on this earth. Here, it seems to me, there is no disputing the force of the evidence Nisbet brings to bear to sustain his interpretation of early Christian texts.

He draws on the most reflective of the early Christian thinkers—Tertullian, Eusebius, and St. Augustine—with particular effect and shows that they were far from being wholly "other-worldly" in the things they cherished. They were too infused with Greco-Roman cultural values, he argues, to have been indifferent to the achievements of time, as distinct from those of eternity. Nisbet recalls some striking but little-known passages in Tertullian where that philosopher extols the conquest of nature, the progressive cultivation of the earth, the draining of swamps, and the building of cities as manifestations of the laws of motion and change by which the universe is governed. In Eusebius Nisbet displays a thinker who admired Constantine "because his Empire promised to the Christian the prospect of an ever triumphant and ever improving society."



MAURICE CRANSTON, professor of political science at the London School of Economics, has written books on Locke and John Stuart Mill and has translated Rousseau's Social Contract.

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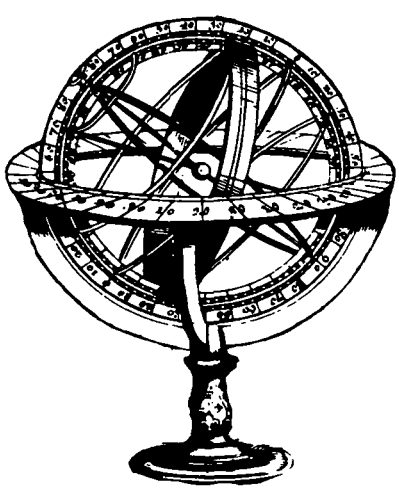
St. Augustine is a more complex thinker than Eusebius, indeed an altogether greater political philosopher than he is commonly supposed to be. He receives from Nisbet a more careful reading than he is usually given. What Nisbet finds relevant to his thesis is a categorical rejection of the "cyclical" theory of history in favor of a conception of "linear" history as a continuous period of time within which the human race advances toward salvation. St. Augustine is also seen as foreshadowing more modern theories of progress with his doctrine of the "sixfold division" of time from the epoch of Adam and Noah to that of the Roman Empire, with the seventh and eighth still in the future. In St. Augustine, Nisbet writes:

> All of the really vital, essential elements of the Western idea of progress are present: mankind or the human race; the unfolding, cumulative advancement of mankind, materially and spiritually, through time, a single time-frame into which all the civilisations, cultures and peoples which have ever existed on earth, or now exist, can be compressed; the idea of time as a unilinear flow; the conception of stages and epochs . . . the conception of social reform rooted in historical awareness; the belief in the necessary character of history and in the inevitability of some future end or objective....

Medieval Christian thought, as Nisbet sees it, built on the foundations of the early fathers, and not only did the Middle Ages think about progress, they witnessed it. The old-fashioned notion that the Middle Ages were lost in darkness and stagnation is now totally discredited. He can point to much recent research to prove that the period between the tenth and the fourteenth centuries



was one of great industrial and intellectual development in Europe. Medieval Christians, however profoundly religious they were, were nonetheless actively interested in those economic, political, and social matters concerning life on earth. Medieval thought, Nisbet suggests, prefigured modernity in its understanding of "plenitude," the belief that there exists in this world all that is necessary for the perfection of mankind; and "continuity," the belief that every stage of human development contains the potential to be actualized in the next stage. These ideas found their most extreme form in Christian millenarianism, later to be secularized in utopian socialist ideology.

THE RENAISSANCE, FOR Nisbet, marks a rejection of the idea of progress. Here his argument will, to some, seem almost startlingly original. His point is that the concept of progress (by the fourteenth century fully evolved) logically entails a belief in past developments of ever-increasing value continuing up to the present, no less than it implies the prospect of future amelioration. The Renaissance had faith in future betterment, but the utmost contempt for the past, other than the very remote classical past. Bacon, the boldest spokesman of the Renaissance mind, would reject even the classical past as readily as the medieval past. But for all Renaissance thinkers, "improvement" was something that had to be started afresh: There was no living heritage to be built upon; there had indeed been no advancement or development in the ten centuries or "dark ages" that preceded the discoveries of the new astronomy, the circumnavigation of the globe, and the introduction into Europe of gunpowder.

The idea of progress was repudiated by Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche.

If the Renaissance thus discarded progress, on Nisbet's analysis the Reformation did something to reanimate it. Jean Bodin—another neglected thinker Nisbet does a service by bringing forward—was one of the first theorists to work out a "philosophy of history" in which the condition of the human race was shown to be bettered as men moved from the primitive toward the modern stage, each age building upon, and profiting from, the accomplishments of its predecessors. Bishop Bossuet in the seventeenth century, with his *Universal History,* embellished Bodin's argument and gave it a more fervently Christian formulation; he stressed the divine character of the unfolding of human destiny but saw it all as the work of time, with continual progress from the worse to the better as the means by which mankind moved toward ultimate redemption.

The Enlightenment said less about divinity, but the idea of progress hardly changed when Voltaire tried to rewrite Bossuet. As Voltaire saw history, men got better and better mainly through their own efforts and the achievement of science, but continuous advance was still the conspicuous and the happy feature of the life of humanity on earth. The Age of Reason was nothing if not an age of faith in progress, but it began to construct new ideas about what man was progressing toward. "Redemption" and "salvation" gave way to more secular ideas, among which Nisbet singles out freedom, and even if people like Rousseau, Herder, Hegel, Kant, and Mill each had a different conception of what freedom is, they all saw freedom as a goal toward which history was carrying humanity.

Nisbet can thus, correctly I think, point to a continuity between beliefs in progress in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and so sustain his argument that progress has been a central value in Western consciousness almost uninterruptedly since the ancient world. The total repudiation of progress he locates as something more or less recent: in the teachings of Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche followed by various cults of the twentieth century, whether nihilist or primitivist. He himself makes a well-reasoned defense of progress from a perspective that is bound to be called liberal-conservative—if only because he insists that belief in progress entails placing a high value on the past; also that achieving a better future requires both acceptance of the discipline and restraint shown to be necessary to achieve long-term satisfactions and adherence to one's faith that a better world is possible (which implies a religious dimension to one's outlook on life).

I share these views of Nisbet's for the most part, but without ascribing the priority he does to progress. The historians he criticizes—those who date the idea from the early modern period—were right, I think, to see that date as at least the beginning of the ideology of progress, or of what might be called the

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"progressive mentality." Bacon, who is rightly seen by Nisbet as the boldest antagonist of the idea of progress as a feature of all history, was also the great innovator in seeing progress as an ideological nostrum. What Bacon says in effect is that history, hitherto stagnant, can start to be progressive if only we reject everything traditional and institute the "reign of science."

It is this proposal that makes Bacon the forefather of so many "progressive" ideologies of our own day, and helps to explain why those ideologies are so shallow and meretricious. For if history has hitherto not been progressive there is no basis in experience, no sound inductive reason to believe that future history will be progressive. Progressive ideology based merely on a generous yearning for perfection is anything but scientific, and has done a great deal of harm in the present century.

For reasons such as these, I doubt whether the concept of progress can be wholly rescued from those who have devalued it in the contemporary world. So many deleterious things are done in the name of "progress"—or "development," a cant word for the policy of forced industrialization—that one is very tempted to say no to progress altogether. Nisbet's book should rescue us from that temptation. ❏

LIVES OF THE MODERN POETS, by William H. Pritchard. Oxford University Press, 316 pp., $14.95.

Distilled into voices

ANTHONY BURGESS

*HEARING OF THIS PUBLI*cation before seeing it, I felt my heart lift in the expectation that Professor Pritchard had been permitted to perform the Johnsonian job for our time. The *Lives of the English Poets* was a work of Dr. Johnson's old age, and it came after a long period of literary inactivity. He was commissioned to write prefaces, some brief, some, like the life of Milton, of pamphlet length, for a comprehensive collection of the poets considered important in the late eighteenth century. Ostensibly biographies, these were actually critical assessments made in the light of somewhat impressionistic surveys of the poets' lives.

Johnson was old enough to have known personally many of the poets dealt with. He had suffered Grubstreet privations with some. One life, that of Savage (which he had written much earlier), is an exemplary chronicle of suffering in which the unhappy subject becomes a paradigm of all persecuted poets. Wide reading and long meditation on the aesthetics of literature enabled Johnson to write with fluent authority and with a minimum of concern about either the recorded biographical facts, which often conflicted with his memory, or his memory of other men's memories, and the depositions of other critics on the oeuvres he surveyed. Johnson was sure of his own taste and of the criteria that led him to the confidence of epigrammatic judgments like (of Milton) "he was a lion that had no skill in dandling the kid."

Pritchard lives in an age when pub-

ANTHONY BURGESS's recent books include 1985 *and* Jesus of Nazareth.

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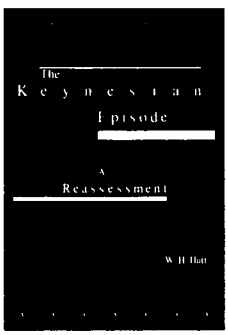

The Keynesian Episode

By W. H. Hutt

An unsparing reassessment of the dominant economic movement of our century. *The Keynesian Episode* looks back to tell us why Lord Keynes' economic doctrines had such great appeal among academics and politicians—with such disastrous results—and looks ahead to tell us how to restore a sound economy. Long a leading critic of Keynesianism, Professor Hutt first attempted to prepare a second edition of his 1963 book, *Keynesianism—Retrospect and Prospect*, but ended up with a new book. The result is a fresh masterpiece of economic history and analysis.

Born in 1899, W. H. Hutt graduated from the London School of Economics and based his academic career at the University of Cape Town. He is presently Distinguished Visiting Professor of Economics at the University of Dallas. Hardcover $10.00, Paperback $4.50.

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lishers and booksellers see no profit in poetic projects, though should some New York or London house intent on ruin dream up a scheme analogous to the great one of 1777, he would be an admirable choice for the prefaces. If he wants to write about the modern poets, he must decide for himself whom to deal with and present his own taste more than the taste of the age. Moreover, he is afflicted, like all critics of our time, with a lack of certainty about literary values, and his own assessments must bob and dance uneasily among those of others "dangerous to disagree with" (which is what T. S. Eliot said about Johnson). We have reached a stage, just two centuries after Johnson's testament of poetic values (published in 1779–81), in which there are conflicting philosophies of art and no honest man knows any more what is good or bad in poetry. In Pritchard's own book we have Frank Kermode lauding to the skies Yeats's Robert Gregory elegy, and Yvor Winters saying, "I confess that I think it is a very bad poem."

We live in an age when publishers and booksellers see no profit in poetic projects.

Our confidence in judging poetry in the traditional way—the assessment of success or failure in using a verbal artifact as a correlative for personal emotion—has been much shaken by French structuralism and poststructuralism. I was recently lecturing at the University of Nantes on *Measure for Measure* and was oppressed by academic wrangling about the *sous-texte*. In France authors are not what they used to be: palpable, intelligent constructors equipped with profound self-knowledge which they take a chance on extrapolating as knowledge of the human world. What authors produce, they no longer produce; they are the accidental amanuenses of objects that have their own life and logic and must be adjudged as *trouvailles* or meteorites. The poem is a thing that just happens to be there, and the intrusion of talk about the author's soul or skill is impertinent.

By relating life to literature, Pritchard has come out squarely on the side of the older view. A poem contains many things, but what it primarily contains is a way of using language, a voice that is one man's and one man's only, though it may be assumed, as with Yeats, and be appropriate to a persona. Eliot's poetry is Eliot, even when we seem to be listening to an actor pretending to be old or Jules Laforgue or Launcelot Andrewes.

Pritchard has chosen, as the greatest poetic forces of the first half of the twentieth century, one Englishman, one Irishman, and seven Americans. There is nothing chauvinistic in this: It is possible to affirm that nationality means little while language means everything. British and American poets share what is, despite the intrusion of disparate histories and geographies, a common experience, and many have bridged the Atlantic with ease. Robert Frost, who is considered very American, first published and came to notice when living in Sussex. Ezra Pound opted for Europe and even for Mussolini. Eliot became a London gentleman and pewholder. But, if we wish to cling to the national letter, we shall be constrained to admit that America has done better in this century than Britain in all branches of literature and, for that matter, literary criticism. To attempt to explain why would be tedious, but I believe it to have something to do with the liveness of the American variety of English and the comparative effeteness of what the British speak. Any Englishman like myself, speaking Britglish in America, has to be aware that he is using a dying tongue.

THE PRITCHARD MODERN poets, then, are Thomas Hardy, W. B. Yeats, E. A. Robinson, Robert Frost, Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, Wallace Stevens, Hart Crane, and William Carlos Williams. If I shy at the presence of Robinson and Crane, that may be my Englishry coming out, but I cannot deny that Professor Pritchard makes fine cases for both of them. Robinson's verse "tells the more the more it is not told"; Crane (to use Allen Tate's words) was "the twentieth-century poet as hero," and Robert Lowell testified to his "tremendous power": "The push of the whole man is there."

You will see here that I am quoting not Pritchard but others whom Pritchard quotes, and one of my regrets about this fine volume is that Pritchard is so infrequently on his own. It is the academic blight to be too much aware of other people's judgments. Pritchard is a fine enough critic in his own right, and he could have dared to be more Johnsonianly independent. Still, he does dare when commenting on Pound commenting on Hardy: "Now *there* is clarity. There is the harvest of having written twenty novels first." Pritchard says of Poem #816 in the *Complete Poems*, "'Proud Songsters' is the harvest of having written roughly 815 poems first." However, one may not call a single poem a harvest.

It is perhaps the dogmatism of Ezra Pound—"a man who throughout his life had a penchant for making strong, incisive distinctions, like a sculptor impressing on his material the form of a mind"—which has helped warn other writers of the virtues of tentativeness. See where excess of conviction eventually put Pound. On the *Cantos* Pritchard speaks sensibly. They have to be read, but not with the adoration of a Professor Kenner, who refuses to find fault. "Why should we not admit to feeling ambiguously about this most unambiguous of poets even to the point of cultivating uncertainties and tentativeness of response, since his own responses are so untentative and certain of their acuity?" But Pound's certainty about Eliot is not to be mistrusted: "His was the true Dantescan voice—not honoured enough, and deserving more than I ever gave him. . . . Who is there now for me to share a joke with?" Eliot is not to be taken as the poet of "negative" emotions, or rather his poetry of recoil from contact with the world must be accepted as the legitimate expression of experience universally recognized: "Antilife" is an aspect of life.

The stress throughout these essays is on how a life can be distilled into a voice. Pritchard's final poet is William Carlos Williams, that most American of modern American poets, of whom Lowell said (and again Pritchard makes me quote someone he is quoting): "He loves America excessively, as if it were *the* truth and *the* subject; his exasperation is also excessive as if there were no other hell. His flowers rustle by the superhighways and pick up all our voice." When a poet can, with the insidiousness of poets, make his own voice the voice of a generation, then we can—though always tentatively—consider using some such term as "great." It is a matter of rhythm more than content, though the two are as hard

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to separate in poetry as in music.

Pritchard considers that Yeats, Frost, Eliot, and Wallace Stevens are the poets whose "presences are the most continuous and inescapable." It is because their rhythms, and the meaning of those rhythms, are in our heads. "A terrible beauty is born. . . . A broken drinking goblet like the Grail. . . . The awful daring of a moment's surrender. . . . The only emperor is the emperor of ice cream. . . ." It is the color of saying, as Dylan Thomas called it, that modifies our sensibilities through our mouths. A poem is a statement that comes out of an individual life, but because there is a thing called humanity, that life can be shared once it has found the voice of utterance. Professor Pritchard's title and emphases are superbly right.

***GO QUIETLY . . . OR ELSE*, by Spiro T. Agnew. William Morrow, 288 pp., $10.95.**

Great gobs of gabbling garbage

ROBERT SHERRILL

*WHY DID VICE PRESI-*dent Spiro Agnew quit?

Until the very day he resigned, Agnew swore that he would never leave office voluntarily. Less than two weeks earlier he had told two thousand Republican women in Los Angeles, "I will not resign if indicted. *I will not resign if indicted.*" They stood and cheered him. Agnew's closest friends were convinced he would never confess to any of the charges made against him: that he had taken bribes from contractors when he was governor of Maryland and that he had cheated on his income tax.

Agnew asked House Speaker Carl Albert to set up a special committee to investigate the charges. When Albert turned him down, Agnew seemed prepared to go the whole route through the courts. However, his adamancy ended with strange suddenness and he did step down as vice president on October 10, 1973, the same day he pleaded guilty (okay, so it was nolo contendere, but the judge said it was the same as a guilty plea) to income tax evasion.

Why the turnabout? Why the surrender? Columnist Jack Anderson wrote at the time that Agnew aides told him the vice president quit because the Nixon crowd threatened to disclose some spicy details of his private life if he held out. In their book on the Agnew downfall, *A Heartbeat Away,* Richard Cohen and Jules Witcover wrote that in his effort to regain the confidence of disappointed friends, Agnew made "dark hints that some sinister development, to be disclosed at some vague time in the future, had forced him to step aside."

So here we are, nearly seven years later, at what Agnew's publisher touts as the moment of truth—"his own story of the events leading to his resignation."

His own story comes down to this:

Agnew, convinced that Justice Department insiders were trying to drive him from office, attacked Attorney General Elliot Richardson and Assistant Attorney General Henry Petersen in speeches and in press interviews. Agnew fought back so vigorously that it appeared the Nixon administration was sinking into civil war. This infuriated Nixon. He was already harried by the Watergate investigation and he wanted no more sniping from his vice president. So he dispatched his number one military honcho, General Alexander Haig, to talk to Agnew's military aide, General Mike Dunn.

According to Dunn, Haig came with a sort of ultimatum. He said that if Agnew quit kicking up a fuss and left office in a gentlemanly fashion, he would be helped financially and the IRS would be persuaded to go easy on him. If he admitted guilt to the tax charge, other criminal charges—bribery and extortion—would be dropped. But if he continued to rebel, things could get rough for him.

Haig's proposals are allegedly to be found in a Dunn memo. But in addition to the written memo, Agnew says he draws on memory of what Dunn told him orally. "General Dunn told me that General Haig also reminded him about the great power of the presidency, saying, 'The President has a lot of power—don't forget that.'"

Neither the material in the Dunn memo nor the orally transmitted material seems much out of the ordinary considering the circumstances. In the dog-eat-dog environment of the Nixon White House, made especially desperate by the Watergate investigation, it seems rather moderate.

BUT AGNEW TOOK IT—OR claims he took it—as a dire threat. He says he now realized that Nixon had "become my mortal enemy." Mortal enemy? He actually felt Nixon and his aides were willing to kill him? That's what he claims. He says he interpreted even Haig's ordinary observation about the President having "a lot of power" as a potential death threat.

"His remark sent a chill through my body. I interpreted it as an innuendo that anything could happen to me; I might have a convenient 'accident,'" he writes.

"I was close enough to the presidency to know that the office could exert tremendous power. [Say, now there's a revelation.] I had attended secret sessions of the National Security Council and knew something about the functioning of the intelligence community. I knew that men in the White House, professing to speak for the President, could order the CIA to carry out missions that

ROBERT SHERRILL, White House correspondent for The Nation, *is the author of* The Last Kennedy: Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts, Before and After Chappaquiddick.

The Effects of Nuclear War

Produced as background for SALT by the Office of Technology Assessment, this report analyzes several levels of nuclear exchange, and estimates the immediate loss of human life and the 'collateral' damage—to hospitals, the water and food supply, and so forth—that would affect the chances of survivors. ("... A bomb falling in the vicinity of the University of Detroit... 1,000,000 estimated immediate casualties; one-half million in need of medical attention... half the hospitals in the city have been obliterated...") The report has been called 'astounding' and 'a blockbuster.' It is, in the event, the first of its kind that is not a defense analysis, and is, in the present state of the predictive art, probably truthful. It speaks not only to the specific issues debated in SALT, but to the risks inherent in calculating a limited nuclear exchange, and to the contradictions that increasingly appear to vitiate the politics of deterrence. It is available in a hardbound edition for $9.95 from your bookstore, or from the publisher,

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were very unhealthy for people who were considered enemies. . . .

"I did not know what might happen to me. But I don't mind admitting I was frightened. This directive was aimed at me like a gun at my head. That is the only way I can describe it. I was told, 'Go quietly—or else.'

"I feared for my life. If a decision had been made to eliminate me—through an automobile accident, a fake suicide, or whatever—the order would not have been traced back to the White House."

It is always fun to think the worst of Nixon and of all those twits who surrounded him. It would be pleasantly perverse to take seriously this Agnewian interpretation of unseen shadows.

Spiro Agnew proved himself to be a whining, arrogant, petty, mean-spirited, bullying toad.

But even for us Nixon haters, there's a limit. Agnew offers not one sliver of evidence to support the suggestion that Nixon or his henchmen either in this or any other instance contemplated killing a political opponent. He alludes to the CIA's attempts to kill Fidel Castro as proof of the threat that hung over him. But the revelation of those attempts came later; and, in any event, they were attempts that had been made in the days of Kennedy and Johnson, not of Nixon. Furthermore, when Agnew writes, "I was told, 'Go quietly—or else,'" you must take that for what it is—a paraphrase of what, after six years of stewing and with a book to be sold, he thinks, or says he thinks, Haig might have been saying; not in fact what Haig did say.

At the conclusion of that melodramatic passage, Agnew, seeming to realize that the American public may not be quite so gullible as he always assumed it to be, concedes: "Perhaps I overreacted, but my mental state after months of constant pressure was hardly conducive to calm and dispassionate evaluation."

So what we are offered, at long last, is an acknowledged hallucination as the reason for his resignation. If that is the true cause, it is fitting. Agnew's whole career, from the time he was elected governor as a "liberal" in the 1960s to his appearance as a novelist in the 1970s, seems a bad trip.

In a quirky way, *Go Quietly* is nothing but a backhanded tribute to the accuracy of the Cohen-Witcover job, for Agnew contradicts no details of their version and he often quotes directly from their book as his primary source. He simply offers a different interpretation of the details they supplied.

AGNEW CALLS HIS ACCUSERS liars, but he offers absolutely no evidence to refute their accusations—no "evidence," that is, except for details of how he imagined his accusers would look if they ever got in the witness chair: one "fidgeting and wringing his hands," another "furtive, sweating, voice cracking," a third accuser "oily and unctuous, eyes shifting rapidly," a fourth "too bluff and hearty to be believed." Only a politician or novelist of Agnew's caliber would seriously offer such proof of his innocence.

This book reminds us once again that Agnew's most offensive and detrimental actions were not the result of greed or of what he called "a long-established pattern of political fund-raising." He was just another Maryland crook. Between 1964 and 1977, sixteen of Maryland's top officials were convicted of some form of corruption and ten actually went to prison. Agnew was not unusual, and his crookedness, except as it strengthened a pattern, was not in itself unusually harmful. The great injury he inflicted was to the nation's pride, by revealing himself to be an arrogant, petty, mean-spirited, bullying, whining toad, and by embarrassing us with another reminder of how stupid we Americans can be at the polls.

Just when he was beginning to become a nicely vague memory, he pops up again from these pages. Here he is in his Caligula robes, grandly informing Nixon, "I will make a speech to the nation. It will be lofty in tone." Here he is at his modest-blustering, schizophrenic best, admitting that "I was never allowed to come close enough to participate with Nixon directly in any decision" and yet insisting he was hounded out of office because "I'm a big trophy." Here he is as a glassy-eyed moralist, arguing that he had done nothing wrong in taking cash from contractors because "I could not possibly make ends meet on my $25,000 salary as governor or $65,000 salary as Vice-President and fulfill all the financial and social obligations of those offices."

Here he is, licking his pencil stub and trying to scribble lines ("bestial barbs of the press" . . . "braggadocian struttings by the celebrated prosecutorial giant-killers") in pitiful imitation of the speeches once ghosted for him by Pat Buchanan. And finally here he is in the guise of an unshirted Beelzebub, whimpering of his treatment by his creator: "The Vice-President, who had shared the tremendous victory in the national election less than a year before, was suddenly hurled into outer darkness, into the limbo of forgotten men."

Ah, would that that limbo had swallowed him in fact. But, drat it, passing reporters and impoverished TV interview shows and desperate book publishers keep dragging him to the surface. Now he is actually talking about running for office again. What's going on? Has Spiro Agnew become our Frankenstein monster, our Dracula, our Mummy's Hand—chief character for an endless series of "Late Late Show" political remakes?

***THE LONG JOURNEY OF NOAH WEBSTER*, by Richard M. Rollins. University of Pennsylvania Press, 195 pp., $16.00.**

More genteel than God

GUY DAVENPORT

NOAH WEBSTER'S LAST words, "The room is growing crepuscular," put the old codger before us in a fine light. Pedantically genteel, they were worthy of the schoolmaster whose *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language* (known to schoolteachers from Maine to Georgia as "Webster's Blue Back Speller") had sold in millions—and is still in print—and whose *An American Dictionary of the English Language* was the Republic's absolute arbiter of spelling and usage. In one of its two hefty volumes his grieving but puzzled family found the meaning of "crepuscular."

Richard M. Rollins's study of Web-

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ster is an essay in the history of ideas rather than a biography, and has something of the air of discovery about it, as if he hadn't suspected Webster of being so curmudgeonly a reactionary, so sanctimonious a fundamentalist, or so smug a pessimist. Rollins keeps Webster well-placed against his historical background; so much so, in fact, that Webster disappears into it. We lose sight of him in the panorama. This is a tactical error, for practically all readers will be familiar enough with the history of Webster's time, whereas Webster himself is one of those figures we think we know something about, but don't. His family, his trips to Europe, his everyday behavior, his scientific interests, his manner in the classroom—our curiosity in all these matters is disappointed while we are taken through pages of squabblings between Federalists and Republicans.

The official biography of Webster enshrined in the front of the Merriam-Webster Third International Unabridged is a masterpiece of euphemism. The truth is that Webster did not believe in democracy. It had been ruined, he was convinced, by the vote, scoundrels in office, atheists (Thomas Jefferson, for example), sin, drink, and general mummery. "We deserve all our public evils. We are a degenerate and wicked people." He believed in the literal truth of the Bible but disapproved of its coarseness, and he politely reworded its sacred text so that its blunt way with anatomy, reproduction, and heroic odors would not offend New England sensibilities. Isaiah would have thought him a prig. He was the sort of man who in Heaven would think himself too good to associate with a salacious wop like Dante.

The *Dictionary* is a doughty deed: seventy thousand entries, twenty-five years' labor, and the last comprehensive dictionary to be compiled by one man. Samuel Johnson's great opus had been *the* dictionary for seventy-three years when Webster published his. In the meantime technology had proliferated, America had spawned new words prodigiously, and the science of linguistics had made its appearance. Webster, however, paid scant attention to new American words and turned a blind eye to linguistics. He was committed to his fundamentalist theory that the Ur-language was Chaldee as spoken by Adam, Eve, and God. All other languages came from the confusion at Babel. Webster's etymologies are therefore naively wrongheaded when they are not downright wrong. "Webster," said Sir James Murray, the first editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, "had the notion that derivations can be elaborated from one's own consciousness."

It was typically American, this homemade dictionary. Like Franklin in science and Fenimore Cooper in the novel, Webster drew on a heroic New World *virtù*, and was given credit for this prodigious work here and abroad as an achievement of universal erudition and the purest of morals. He himself thought of it as a conservative bulwark against the tide of Jacobinism, vulgarity, and ungodliness which he felt was washing away the foundations of the young republic. Something had to hold fast. He chose to defend, purify, and set in order the one common social bond, language. If enough people wrote and spoke with a nice regard for the accurate meanings of words, all might not be lost. Webster felt that truth was in words—is not language a divine gift?—and that we owe them reverence. He hoped to lead us away from the mischief of cant and the sloth of vagueness. Not law, religion, or literature can speak meaningfully with imprecise words.

A lexicographer has godlike powers. Everything in the world passes his gaze and inspection. He can, like Johnson, define *Pope* as "the bishop of Rome," in grand dismissal of the word, or *whig* as "a faction." He can omit noisome words, ride his hobbies (Webster defined *democrat* as "synonymous with the word Jacobian [*sic*] in France"), and play not only tyrant but God himself creating the world. It is thanks to Webster's insistence on pronouncing vigorously and fully that we today mispronounce *falcon, clapboard, forehead, cemetery, often,* and many another word Americanized by being divided up into syllables in the Blue Back Speller. Rollins's discussion of Webster the lexicographer is the best part of his study; he might plausibly have built his book around the *Dictionary* rather than around Webster's about-face disillusionment with the American experiment. The one touched everybody and has continued to be a shaping force; the other was forgotten (like Patrick Henry's disgust with the young country, or Cooper's reservations about democracy).

We still say "light and dark meat" to satisfy Webster's prudery, avoiding the depraving words *breast* and *thigh*, and *limb* instead of the suggestive *leg*. It is perhaps a clue to sociological tensions between classes that Webster's high-minded vocabulary exerted moral sanctions against the vernacular. Such a homely and useful word as *piss*, which was good enough for the King James Bible and Dr. Johnson, was cast by Webster into outer dark, along with other "low" words known to everybody but henceforth banned by moral arrogance. Even now, the Merriam-Webster Third International Unabridged, wholly revised, pretends that some blunt words don't exist, and as a sole homage to the Founder prints *God* with the only capital letter among all its entries.

For all the types we can fit Webster into—patriot, cultural hero, Calvinist, Federalist, crank—we cannot fit his diversity into any. He was a large man. He moved with energy and ease in his world, discussing spelling reform with Franklin, medicine with Benjamin Rush, and standing on the very steps of Mount Vernon soliciting a blurb from Washington for his spelling book (Washington declined, pleading, with his famous honesty, ignorance of such things). One wishes there were more in this study about Webster the private person, his wife Rebecca, and their children. Rollins makes much of placing Webster in his time, among the turbulent intellectual forces that shaped him and buffeted him, but he neglects to show us Webster at table, in church, in conversation. We are left with an out-of-focus picture of a man who prayed thrice a day and wrote many pamphlets and one stupendous dictionary, but is otherwise invisible. Of his visit, or visits, to Europe we are told nothing. His important work as an educator and as a founder of Amherst might have been treated with more detail.

The effect of this book is to create a lively interest in Webster the man and to follow that interest only in Webster the scholar and polemicist. Perhaps, indeed, he wasn't that kind of figure, so we shall never know him in a pose congenial to the imagination: Jefferson playing his fiddle, Lincoln reading on muleback, John Adams bridling at being read Byron by his daughter, John Marshall dancing in Virginia taverns. I still can see him only as Uriah Heep sniffing out naughty words in the Bible, deleting them, and congratulating himself on being more genteel than God. ❑

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***THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK*, directed by Irvin Kershner.**

***THE LONG RIDERS*, directed by Walter Hill.**

The empire strikes out

ELLIOTT STEIN

APRIL WAS A BUMMER THIS year for the film industry. Large audiences were not lured into theaters by such assorted clinkers as *Serial, Where the Buffalo Roam,* or *Nijinsky.* With the release in late May of *The Empire Strikes Back,* the sequel to George Lucas's *Star Wars,* it is likely that by now box office cash registers around the planet will be tinkling anew.

This latest space opera has had heavy advance publicity and hype: a *Time* cover story, a feature in *Newsweek,* two long pieces on the film in the same issue of the *New York Times*—and *Time* took a full-page ad in the *Times* to congratulate itself on "*Time*'s ability to spot brilliance early and sense its importance." Over a million dollars is being spent to promote the soundtrack album alone. The ugly poster is everywhere. At Macy's, it was like Christmas in May—the toy department crawling with a new generation of Wookies and adorable robots. Employees of the Lucas empire worked practically around the clock in preparation for the film's premiere. The fan club—"The Official Star Wars Fan Club serves as a forum of communication"—has signed up more new enthusiasts than John Anderson.

We had been psyched up to expect the greatest event in the history of the cinema since Al Jolson moaned out "Mammy" in *The Jazz Singer.* After the hype, we now, alas, must cope with the movie. It begins with our old friends, the rebels, holed up on the ice planet of Hoth, where they have taken refuge from the vile Darth Vader. Luke Skywalker toddles about on a tauntaun (a llama-kangaroo that jumps around in the snow) and is suddenly struck by a Wampa ice creature—a sort of giant Andy Warhol with a fright wig. Meanwhile, back in the cavern, the robots tweet robotnik aphorisms, the Wookie barks plaintively, and Princess Leia and Han Solo indulge in sophisticated amatory banter. (He: "Don't go mushy on me, Princess." She: "I'd sooner kiss a Wookie.") Vader's forces enter Hoth and a pitched battle ensues.

Luke takes off on a wing fighter to the bog planet of Dagobah, where he is to learn the secrets of the Force from a Muppet guru named Yoda. Han and the princess set off in the Falcon for the cloud city of Bespin. They are nearly captured by Vader's Star Destroyers, but succeed in camouflaging the Falcon in a dump of Empire garbage. On Bespin they are captured by Vader. Han is frozen in carbonite and taken off by the

GEORGE WHITEAR

bounty hunter Boba Fett. Luke arrives and engages in a light-saber duel with Vader, who reveals that he is Luke's father. Quite shaken by this news, as were we all, Luke falls into an exhaust pipe and is rescued by the princess. End.

That's it. Though it may sound simple, on screen the story is confusing. There are serious continuity gaps, especially in the sequences involving the character of Boba Fett ($20 million and no script girl!). Lucas scholars can bridge these gaps by perusing the novelization of the film by Donald Glut—which is already on the market.

This time around, Lucas contented

ELLIOTT STEIN, coauthor of Caligari's Cabinet and Other Grand Illusions: A History of Film Design, *writes regularly for* Film Comment.

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himself with writing the story and serving as executive producer. Irvin Kershner (*Eyes of Laura Mars, The Return of a Man Called Horse*) was hired to direct because of his rumored skill with actors. To no avail. Mark Hamill (Luke) and Harrison Ford (Han) are sour heroes who emit less personality than the robots. The presence of Alec Guinness lent a modicum of dignity to *Star Wars*—in *Empire* he appears as a hologram for about forty seconds. Leia is again portrayed by Carrie Fisher, but as the exotic princess of outer galaxies she exudes all the warmth and mystery of a testy dental hygienist.

GEORGE WHITEAR

*LUCAS'S COMIC-BOOK EC*lecticism has spread a wide net. John Williams's score occasionally blares out the original *Star Wars* theme (which bears an uncanny resemblance to—of all things—a passage in Elie Siegmeister's *Sunday in Brooklyn*); the ice planet of Hoth and its fauna are derived from Frigia, the frozen realms of Mongo, in Alex Raymond's 1939 "Flash Gordon" strips; the bog planet of Dagobah is a dreary puddle, an unsuccessful copy of the swamp in the 1933 *King Kong*; the cloud city of Bespin has been seen in every version of *The Thief of Baghdad* ever filmed—in all of which it looked better. Vader's digs are hardly Empire; they are decidedly neo-Brutalist—he seems to live in a large corner of the Whitney Museum.

This thing cost twice as much to make as *Star Wars* and is twice as boring. It has less energy than its predecessor and is far more pretentious. It seems a prisoner of its own storyboarding. Scenes have no intrinsic momentum: One sits in disinterested stupor as droids, robots, humans, and humanoids go through the motions of resembling as much as possible the hundreds of sketches the film's production designers have drawn and kept pinned to their walls for the last few years. The army of technicians (the list of special-effects credits is slightly longer than the Book of Numbers) has vainly attempted to bring them all to life, frame by plodding frame.

The new star in *Empire*, the much-touted Yoda, is a Tolkienesque pixie puppet—a Miss Piggy without the sex appeal. Yoda's philosophy of the Force as expatiated to Luke is a sort of EST for Sesame Streeters.

In *King Kong*, which was the *Star Wars* of its day and a great film, the special effects and overall design were under the control of one man, a true wizard and fine artist named Willis O'Brien. He gave an overall "look" to the movie which fascinated the eye, while the mind, intrigued by an imaginatively written modern fairy tale, cared about the characters—even about the big ape. *Empire* is a computerized fantasy fabricated by a regiment of technicians. The result is a film devoid of spontaneity, lyricism, poetry, and charm.

The puff-piece *Time* article (which was longer than that issue's coverage of the presidential campaign, the Cuban refugee story, and the Pope's visit to Africa combined) quoted the Koran and Joseph Campbell, dragged in Dante, Aeneas, and Prometheus, compared Luke Skywalker to Ulysses and George Lucas to Homer. It also announced that *Empire* is to be followed by seven more *Star Wars* films—so we can all look forward to two more decades of Force-feeding by Lucas-Homer industries.

WHILE GEORGE LUCAS WAS polluting outer space with his million-dollar tinkertoys, Walter Hill (*Hard Times, The Driver, The Warriors*) was busy in the wide open spaces of that most intrinsically American of genre films—the Western. In the heat of late-sixties cause fever, the Western fell upon hard times: It was seen as imperialist, racist, antifeminist, antiecology. It came back into favor briefly during the early seventies, but Hollywood has not turned out a major Western in several years. Hill's *The Long Riders* has been lovingly crafted, deals with recognizable human beings, and is one of the rare American films released this year that are worth the price of admission.

The director's coup in casting four sets of real brothers—Carradines (David, Keith, and Robert), Keaches (Stacy and James), Quaids (Dennis and Randy), and Guests (Christopher and Nicholas)—as brother-members of the James-Younger gang was more than a gimmick. It pays off in terms of credibility. The characters seem related and inhabited, just as the houses and streets in the film (shot in Texas and Georgia) seem lived in and used—nothing smells of a studio set.

This is a traditional Western that makes no stabs at a depth analysis of the outlaw psyche. To a degree, the gang's existence is seen as an extension of the camaraderie shared by members of the defeated Confederate Army, and to a degree—but no further, for Hill is not insistent—they are seen as folk heroes and Robin Hoods because they steal from the banks and railroads hated by the Missouri farmers. For the most part, they are played as just folks, speaking

colloquial, convincing, period dialogue as they go about their business of courting wives, chasing whores, getting married, going square dancing—and now and then holding up a stagecoach or robbing a train.

Riders is slow, atmospheric, almost elegiac. It is an austere film; the clean, uncluttered, near-empty landscapes have been beautifully caught by cinematographer Ric Waite. With their large hats, dark ties, long cavalry jackets, and mournful faces, the outlaws often look like a mounted funeral procession. The final shootout is a spectacular set piece, brilliantly edited.

Hill excels as a portraitist. There are wonderful faces here, especially those of the women—Fran Ryan, as the stolid mother of Jesse and Frank James, and Pamela Reed, who makes of Belle Starr a tough cherub, both lewd and innocent. One of the best scenes in the film is a bizarrely choreographed barroom knife fight between Cole Younger (David Carradine) and Belle's Indian husband (James Remar) that probably took less than three hours to shoot; it is more exciting and involving than the light-saber duel in *The Empire Strikes Back*, which must have kept eight hundred persons busy for three weeks. ❑

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THEATER

***Le Centre International de Créations Théâtrales*, directed by Peter Brook.**

A utopian in limbo

STEPHEN HARVEY

IN THOSE DISTANT DAYS OF, say, the premiere of *Le Sacre du Printemps,* the avant-garde evoked fisticuffs in the aisles and squawks in the bourgeois press. At present, however, it's more likely to produce packed houses of the faithful applauding their own savvy contemporaneity, and panegyrics from such bohemian journals as the *New York Times* and the *Post.* No recent theatrical season has been complete without at least one visiting sacred cow of experimental persuasion, and with Richard Foreman and Robert Wilson unaccountably truant and Andrei Serban forswearing excursions into ancient Greek for the time being, Peter Brook and his Le Centre International de Créations Théâtrales have come up with this year's prime specimen. At New York's foremost experimental theater, La Mama (backed by that noted connoisseur of radical theatrical forms, Alexander H. Cohen), Brook's Paris-based company presented a six-week run of three programs in repertory.

The response was by and large predictable: standing ovations from those fortunate enough to have somehow acquired tickets, and a fervid wish by *Newsweek* that ten years from now, perhaps the world will be pure enough to be worthy of Peter Brook and his mission. Personally, judging from the one double bill I caught, I hope I never get to be quite so pure myself. All that cunning simplicity is just wasted on the unregenerate likes of me.

The expressed goal and reason for being of Brook's centre is actually rather utopian and sweet: to create theatrical works based on the cultural heritages of various societies by assembling a multi-ethnic troupe trained in his iconoclastic methods. The hope is that the creations, through their directness and simplicity, will speak to all peoples.

Brook's offerings in New York this spring reflected that ideal: one piece based on a medieval Persian legend (*The Conference of the Birds*), one derived from an anthropological study of a doomed tribe in Uganda (*The Ik*), one timeless African folk tale (*L'Os,* or "the bone"), and one scabrous Western theatrical classic (Alfred Jarry's 1896 *Ubu Roi,* here titled merely *Ubu* and simplified in more ways than one). If one assumes that *L'Os* and *Ubu,* which I attended, are truly indicative of Brook's approach, his work is also utopian in the sense of being impracticable, since his method renders the dramatic works in question accessible mainly by trivializing them to the point of utter banality.

It seems to me that the particular fascination of any society lies in its specifics—those traits of language and custom and belief that distinguish it from all others. Yet the broad buffoonery of *L'Os* is homogenized kiddie theater par excellence, reduced to so common a denominator as to eradicate any of the distinctive indigenous qualities that might have given it some texture. Like most diminutive plays for little people, it has a great big moral to impart amidst all the caper-cuttings—to wit, that greed is bad, and that the avaricious inevitably get theirs if they don't wise up in time.

The protagonist of *L'Os,* Mor Lam, wants payment from his best friend and blood-brother Moussa for a long-standing debt, and his dire threats force Moussa to give up his one possession of value, a cow. Mor Lam salivates over this delectable prize but, to his whimpering dismay, custom dictates that the animal be divided among all the villagers. He settles for a succulent marrow bone, yet even that treat is jeopardized when Moussa arrives, claiming his right as Mor Lam's blood-brother to take half the latter's possessions.

Brook's adaptation of this tale is universal in tone all right—it takes place in some cross-cultural limbo. The setting is an unidentified yet presumably Muslim corner of Africa. The text is spoken in French (his troupe's Esperanto) with occasional English phrases for the sake of non-Francophones in the audience, plus a few sublinguistic broadsides spat out by Mor Lam to intimidate the aforementioned deadbeat into paying up. The hero is played by a black, his pal turned adversary by an oriental, and his educated son by a white. (Actually, this affords the one really amusing sight gag in the piece, the implication being that higher learning turns you into a facsimile of an idiotically grinning white CPA). Yet *L'Os* is far too ephemeral a joke, even clocking in at a mere forty-five minutes, to survive being stripped of its native context in such a fashion.

BROOK'S STAGECRAFT IS infinitely more resourceful in *Ubu,* but no less devastating to the potency of the text. Jarry's play, *Macbeth*-esque with its belching and farting duo assassinating their way to power, is equal parts scatology and prophecy of modern-day totalitarianism. In Brook's hands, *Ubu* is a puckish, frolicsome entertainment defanged of all its menace and horror. The basic stage props deployed on the narrow rectangle of the La Mama performance space throughout *Ubu* are two huge wooden spools, transformed at will into tables, mountains, ships, juggernauts of de-

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struction. The production is chock-full of cute little touches, such as silver-lacquered rubber balls, subbing for cannonballs, lobbed over the heads of the audience onto the stage below. There's also some darling sixties-style audience participation as Mère Ubu cajoles the spectators to lend her a hand, or a pair of glasses, while she searches for buried treasure at the feet of the front-row seatholders.

As played by Andreas Katsulas, Père Ubu is merely a rather appealing, if obtuse, barnyard lout. There's no hint of the grungy magnetism that stirs up the character's followers, or the steely amorality that could have induced him to annihilate his foes so matter-of-factly. Miriam Goldschmidt's Mère Ubu is rather like what would happen if Eartha Kitt were let loose in *The Snake Pit*, and her googly eyes and adenoidal growl wear thinner the harder she works them for laughs. The only really imaginative yet controlled acting in the piece is provided by Mireille Maalouf, who alter-

nates as the queen of Poland and tsar of all the Russias. With her camp-imperious stares and dire Slavic demeanor, hers is such sophisticated farce clowning that it only shows up the eager amateurishness of most of the troupe.

Brook's performers have been painstakingly schooled to use their bodies with agility and precision, but their faces register either precious little or far too much. The players ostentatiously bound from one role to the next, and their voices are flaccid instruments indeed. In order to achieve a theater that transcends all ethnic and national boundaries, Brook is apparently willing to blithely disregard—to put it mildly—the nuances of language. Hence the French declaimed by his polyglot company is usually stilted and unidiomatic; the bursts of English are even muddier, and he milks this for malaprop charm at every opportunity.

The widespread jubilation that greeted Brook's New York engagement only shows that one sure way to disarm an audience is to patronize it—to pretend for the moment that both performers and spectators are feral children stripped for once of the usual phony, grown-up sophistries. It's dismaying that a director as prodigiously gifted as Brook has shown himself to be should actually believe all this. His theater of innocence is a never-never land of soft-headed illusions, and it isn't only the audience that loses out by succumbing with such wide-eyed relish. ❑

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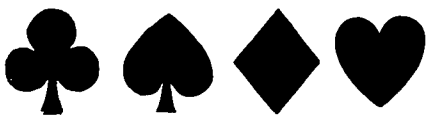

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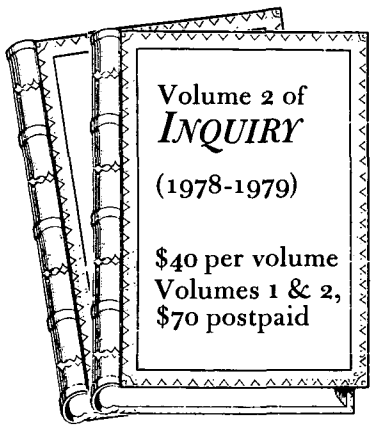

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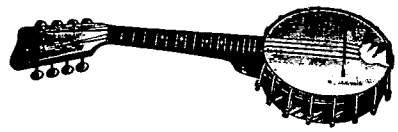

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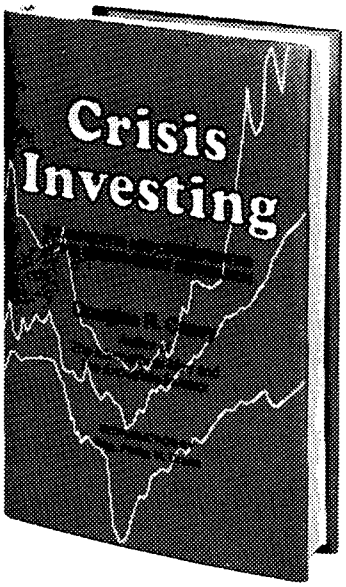

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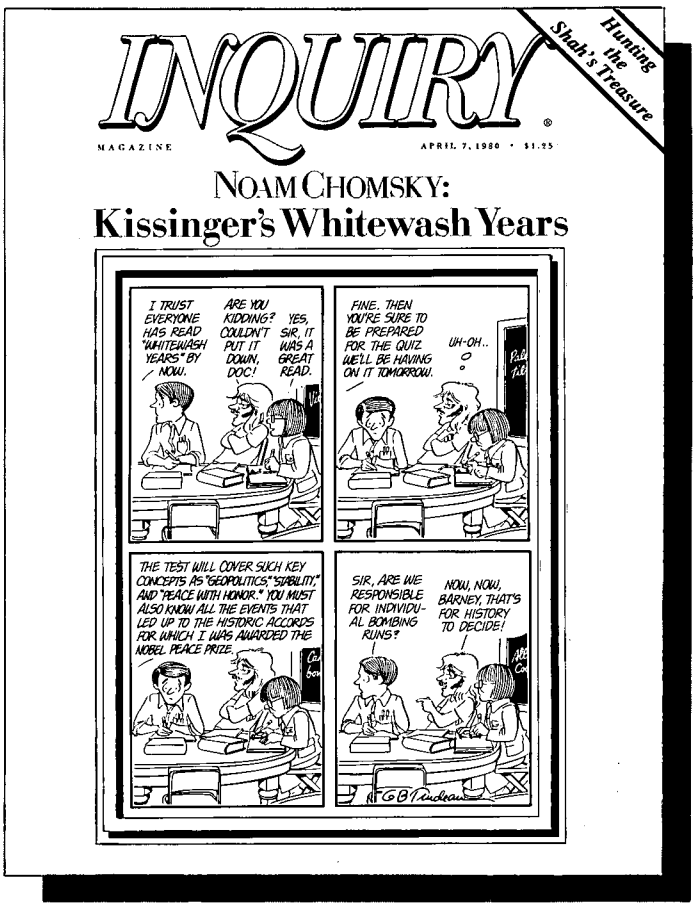
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